



Nov. 19, 2015

Jean Shiomoto  
Director  
Department of Motor Vehicles  
2415 1st Ave., Mail Station F101  
Sacramento, CA 95818-2606

Dear Director Shiomoto,

I am writing on behalf of Consumer Watchdog to express our concern that Google is pressuring the Department of Motor Vehicles to prematurely issue regulations covering the public use of autonomous vehicles. In a recent article AP reporter Justin Pritchard described Google as being frustrated with the DMV's pace at writing the robot car rules. ([http://hosted.ap.org/dynamic/stories/U/US\\_SELF\\_DRIVING\\_CARS?SITE=AP&SECTION=HOME&TEMPLATE=DEFAULT](http://hosted.ap.org/dynamic/stories/U/US_SELF_DRIVING_CARS?SITE=AP&SECTION=HOME&TEMPLATE=DEFAULT))

Consumer Watchdog is not frustrated. We commend the DMV for its thoughtful and thorough approach, and urge that you continue to act in the public's interest, rather than succumbing to corporate pressure. It is imperative that the DMV reject the Internet giant's self-serving lobbying. Quite correctly your department is acting at a deliberate pace to ensure that autonomous vehicle regulations for public use adequately protect our safety. The important thing is getting the regulations right, not rushing them out the door.

Despite what some have suggested, the DMV is not hindering the development of robot cars in our state. There are 10 companies currently testing vehicles under your regulations. Our highways have become corporate laboratories under the autonomous vehicle testing regulations. Those rules correctly require that a human driver be behind the steering wheel, able to take over from the autonomous technology when necessary.

The testing rules have important safeguards, but should still be improved. As you know, Consumer Watchdog has petitioned the department to amend the testing rules to require that police investigate any robot car crash. We also ask that the rules require copies of any technical data and video associated with a robot car crash be turned over to the department. We look forward to a positive response to our petition.

Consumer Watchdog believes there is a clear and deliberate way forward to develop appropriate regulations covering the public use of robot cars that truly protect our safety. First, it is important to remember that the current testing regulations require that companies file "disengagement reports" covering all times and circumstances when a human driver had to take control of a vehicle being tested. Those reports covering the period from last September through Nov. 30 are due on Jan. 1 and should be made public. The disengagement reports will undoubtedly help guide the drafting of the regulations for the public use of robot cars. Just as is required in the testing regulations, the public rules

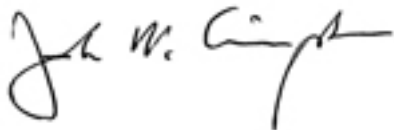
should require a steering wheel and brake pedal and a human driver capable of taking over when necessary.

Another factor that must be considered in developing the rules is the way the robot cars interact with human drivers. Increasingly, including the Google crash report posted on the DMV website this week, (<https://www.dmv.ca.gov/portal/wcm/connect/a35d0b74-02dc-4725-9a5f-cc4ac71e421b/Google+Auto+LLC+11.02.15.pdf?MOD=AJPERES>) there is mounting evidence that the robot cars don't behave the way humans expect.

When the DMV believes it is ready, it will be appropriate for the department to release tentative draft regulations that can be studied by all stakeholders. The draft regulations should then be the subject of scrutiny and discussion at a public workshop where all interested parties can participate. Based on input from that public workshop and the disengagement reports, the DMV should then be in a position to write and issue proposed regulations covering public use of autonomous vehicles. Once those proposed regulations are released to the public, the formal approval process would begin with a public hearing 45 days later. When finally adopted, the new rules would presumably take effect 180 days later.

Google may have its foot on the accelerator pedal in its mad drive to develop robot cars, but the DMV has admirably served as traffic cop and set reasonable limits that have genuinely protected public safety. We call on you to stay on this responsible course and put public safety first.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John M. Simpson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

John M. Simpson  
Privacy Project director

Cc: Brian Soublet, Bernard Soriano, and Jessica Gonzalez