



**Testimony of Ariel Wolf on behalf of the Autonomous Vehicle Industry Association**

**Kansas Senate Committee on Transportation**

**March 10, 2022**

Chair Petersen, Vice Chair Claeys, and Members of the Committee, good morning, my name is Ariel Wolf, and I serve as General Counsel to the Autonomous Vehicle Industry Association (“AVIA”). Thank you for the opportunity to testify on SB 546 and for your continued work on this important legislation. SB 546 recognizes the significant benefits of autonomous vehicles by establishing a framework for the safe and timely deployment of AVs in the State of Kansas. We have worked with the Committee and stakeholders to develop some amendments that would address various issues and concerns, and we are prepared to support this bill as modified by these amendments.

By way of background, the AV Industry Association was formed in 2016 and includes more than 15 of the world’s leading autonomous vehicle companies. Our mission is to support the safe and swift deployment of autonomous vehicles, also known as SAE Levels 4- and 5-capable vehicles. We are committed to bringing the tremendous safety, mobility, and economic benefits of AVs to Kansas businesses and consumers in a safe, responsible, and timely manner.

AVs hold the potential both to save lives and to change the way we move. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration estimates that nearly 39,000 Americans died in motor vehicle crashes in 2020. The numbers released thus far for 2021 appear to be even worse—fatalities are up 18%. The U.S. Department of Transportation has stated that the overwhelming majority of these fatalities involve at least one human behavioral issue as a contributing factor. The ongoing tragedy on our roadways underscores the need to support AV deployment. AVs have the potential to reduce fatal traffic crashes because, unlike human drivers, AVs will never drive drunk, drowsy, or distracted—all major contributors to roadway deaths.

As modified, SB 546 would align Kansas with neighboring states that authorize the safe and timely deployment of AVs and would help bring the safety and economic benefits of this technology to Kansas in a broad and responsible manner. The state’s unique features, including strong engineering talent and geographic centrality, position Kansas to become a leader in the AV ecosystem, while establishing a pro-competitive and level playing field for entities seeking to safely test and deploy AVs in Kansas. With the modifications included in the amendment, we support SB 546 and encourage the Committee to vote in favor of an amended bill. Thank you for your time and consideration.