



TECHNET
THE VOICE OF THE
INNOVATION ECONOMY

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February 10, 2025

The Honorable Dan Ruby, Chair
House Committee on Transportation
500 East Capitol Avenue
Pierre, SD 57501

RE: Hb 1614 relating to the operation of an automated truck tractor.

Dear Chair Ruby:

Thank you for the opportunity to explain why TechNet opposes HB 1614.

I am Rose Feliciano, Executive Director of Washington + Northwest for TechNet. TechNet is the national, bipartisan network of technology CEOs and senior executives that promotes the growth of the innovation economy by advocating a targeted policy agenda at the federal and 50-state level. TechNet's diverse membership includes dynamic American businesses ranging from startups to the most iconic companies on the planet and represents over 4.5 million employees and countless customers in the fields of information technology, artificial intelligence, e-commerce, the sharing and gig economies, advanced energy, transportation, cybersecurity, venture capital, and finance. TechNet has offices in Austin, Boston, Chicago, Denver, Harrisburg, Olympia, Sacramento, Silicon Valley, Tallahassee, and Washington, D.C.

The requirement in Section 2 of having an "individual with a valid commercial driver's license is physically present in the automated truck tractor" effectively bans autonomous deployments in the State of North Dakota.

I understand the Minn-Dak Cooperative have been safely utilizing autonomous trucks in the Red River Valley for the past few years. This legislation would effectively end this successful project.

Autonomous vehicles will make our roads safer, boost supply chain efficiency, and create new, high-quality career opportunities for workers without causing significant job displacement.

An outright prohibition of the operation of AVs truck tractor unless a human operator is physically present in the vehicle is effectively a permanent ban on driverless vehicles. It would undermine the spirit of North Dakota's innovation economy, block the state's residents and businesses from accessing the benefits of AV technology, and further set North Dakota back on this critical innovation relative to other states.

The AV industry is working towards improving road safety and generating new job opportunities for people with different levels of education and skills. Several new roles that

do not necessarily require a college degree are being created, such as service technicians, remote assistance operators, mapping data collectors, delivery packers, and more.

Finally, I would like to highlight that no state has enacted driver-in legislation.

For these reasons, TechNet urges you not to move HB 1614 forward. I appreciate your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Rose Feliciano', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Rose Feliciano
Executive Director
Washington + Northwest