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NATIONAL SHERIFFS' ASSOCIATION SUPPORTS AUTONOMOUS VEHICLES AND AUTOMATED DRIVING SYSTEMS AS A MEANS TO CURB ROADWAY CRASHES, INJURY, AND DEATHS

WHEREAS, A National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) statistical projection of traffic fatalities for 2020 shows that an estimated 38,680 people died in motor vehicle traffic crashes, representing an estimated increase of about 7.2 percent as compared to the 36,096 fatalities reported in 2019[i] and NHTSA reports that impaired driving costs the US $44 billion annually[ii], and;

WHEREAS, according to Consumer Reports, currently advanced safety features will increasingly link into larger systems that will allow cars to drive themselves, providing significant safety and convenience, could help reduce crashes caused by human error, ease congestion, extend the driving years of an aging population, and allow those who are visually or physically impaired to have greater mobility[iii], and;

WHEREAS, the US Department of Transportation offers public awareness with the AV TEST Initiative, working with governmental and private stakeholders to facilitate the safe development, testing, integration, and education of driving automation technology in the United States, with law enforcement guidance on Automated Vehicles, in particular in the NHTSA's Automated Driving Systems: A Vision for Safety 2.0[iv], and;

WHEREAS, according to the IIHS, since 2011, most states have passed legislation or issued executive orders addressing driving automation, including permit testing on public roads or authorizing full deployment[v]. In some states, testing on public roads has been allowed without any specific legislation or regulatory action, with analysis predicting a 33 percent reduction in roadway crashes[vi], and;

WHEREAS, according to the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL), at least twenty-nine states—Alabama, Arkansas, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maine, Michigan, Mississippi, Nebraska, New York, Nevada, North Carolina, North Dakota, Oregon, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, Virginia, Vermont, Washington and Wisconsin —and Washington D.C. have enacted legislation related to autonomous vehicles, while the Governors in Arizona, Delaware, Hawaii, Idaho, Illinois, Maine, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Ohio, Washington and Wisconsin

have issued executive orders related to autonomous vehicles, allowing testing or operation on public roads[vii], and,

WHEREAS, the Governors Highway Safety Association recommends that law enforcement officials, other first responders and crash scene investigators can better prepare for automated vehicle technology, outlines curriculum recommendations to improve safety training protocols, that autonomous vehicle technology specialists serve as area law enforcement liaisons and provide peer-to-peer training to smaller agencies and that these departmental champions may already be engaged with technology-related issues or, especially in smaller departments, being the point-of-contact regarding ADAS and ADS technologies[viii], and;

WHEREAS, the American Association of Motor Vehicle Administrators (AAMVA) has produced a report on consideration for safely deploying Advanced Driver-Assistance Systems and Autonomous Vehicles entitled Safe Testing and Deployment of Vehicles Equipped with Automated Driving Systems Guidelines, Edition 2 with recommendations to law enforcement for ADS-equipped vehicles operated on public roadways, including vehicle identification, crash and incident reporting, criminal activity, distracted driving, law enforcement and first responder interaction plans, adherence to traffic laws, and more[ix];

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the National Sheriffs' Association supports the Autonomous Vehicle industry and encourages all law enforcement agencies, regardless of size, to familiarize officers with AV technologies, become active in planning processes and training, support, and deployment of Autonomous Vehicles in their jurisdiction and those jurisdictions adjacent, help set deployment parameters and enforcement capabilities as a means of improving safety on our nation's roadways, particularly in unincorporated areas.

[i] https://crashstats.nhtsa.dot.gov/Api/Public/ViewPublication/813115#:~:text=A%20statistical%20projection%20of%20traffic,as%20shown%20in%20Table%201

[ii] https://www.nhtsa.gov/risky-driving/drunk-driving#alcohol-abuse-and-cost-5091

[iii] https://www.consumerreports.org/cro/magazine/2014/04/the-road-to-self-driving-cars/index.htm

[iv] https://www.transportation.gov/AV

[v] https://www.iihs.org/topics/advanced-driver-assistance/autonomous-vehicle-laws

[vi] https://www.iihs.org/news/detail/self-driving-vehicles-could-struggle-to-eliminate-most-crashes

[vii] https://www.ncsl.org/research/transportation/autonomous-vehicles-self-driving-vehicles-enacted-legislation.aspx

[viii] https://www.ghsa.org/resources/Preparation-for-Automated-Vehicle-Technology21

[ix] https://www.aamva.org/Autonomous-Vehicle-Information-Library/