DetroitRegionalChamber
Powering the economy for Southeast Michigan

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Testimony to the Senate Economic Development Committee in support of Senate Bills 995–998

Serving the business community for more than 100 years, the Detroit Regional Chamber takes pride in advocating on behalf of businesses throughout the city and region. As one of the most influential chambers of commerce in the country, our members look for us to collaborate with government partners in support of Michigan's reinvention and continued economic growth.

Michigan is storied in the success of America's automotive industry. Following a dynamic period of challenges and rebirth, the automotive industry continues to grow stronger each day. With over 500,000 auto-related jobs in Michigan, this vital industry continues to be the largest in Michigan; and Michigan maintains its title as the automotive center of the country, claiming 23% of the industry's total workforce, worldwide headquarters of the "Big Three", and 63 of the nation's top 100 supplier companies.

A rapidly evolving industry landscape, however, continues to challenge our private and public leaders to adapt and compete with industry priorities such as emissions, performance, and technology. The advent of intelligent mobility will particularly create a fundamental change in how people travel, purchase and own vehicles, and generally define their automotive experience.

Michigan has a unique opportunity to take advantage of the renewed attention on our city and state following the re-awakening and resurgence of Detroit. Michigan must become the epicenter of intelligent mobility and connected vehicle technology, and nurture one of the greatest potential growth segments of Michigan's future economy as the focal point in North America for automotive research and development.

As Michigan's companies rise to the challenge, so must our legislative leaders. Senate Bills 995–998 not only provide a structured regulatory approach to expanded testing and operations of autonomous vehicles – they reinforce Michigan's leading role in the future of the world's automotive industry and position the state as the driving force in defining the next generation of the automobile.

Intelligent mobility is poised to represent the largest shift in how people approach transportation since Henry Ford introduced the "five dollar a day wage" and made the automobile affordable for the average American. This monumental step forward occurred right here in Michigan; 102 years later, we have the opportunity to ensure this next stage of revolution does as well. The Chamber thanks the members of this committee for their support of Senate Bills 995–998 and continuing to support a thriving automotive industry in Michigan.

Sincerely,

Jason Puscas
Director, Government Relations