

Frank McMullin - Comments

I am adamantly opposed to changing or expanding the rules and regulations to allow the use of automated driverless commercial vehicles on public streets, roadways, and highways. Currently, regulations are in place that limit the testing and use of automated vehicles by the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) and National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA). These limits are in place to protect the public, enhance safety, and altering them prematurely will have catastrophic consequences which must be avoided by keeping them unchanged.

The FMCSA already controls, regulates, and enforces the Federal rules and laws related to commercial vehicles. They also regulate the requirements for the issuance of the Commercial Driver License (CDL), and Medical Certificate required for CDL drivers. These regulations are constantly changing, strictly monitored, and restrictive to ensure the safety of the CDL drivers, other drivers, pedestrians, and the general public. I am a professional tractor trailer operator with 30+ years of experience and without any accidents. I know there is no substitute for dedicated, professional human drivers on the Nations roads and highways. In addition to the driving duties each human operating these vehicles also provides a free and valuable service to the public which often goes unnoticed as a traveling lookout serving the communities where we live and work on a daily basis. Drivers like myself regularly report suspicious or criminal activities, aggressive, distracted, impaired or drunk drivers, stranded drivers, broken down vehicles, car fires, house fires, Forrest fires, medical emergencies, accidents, amber alerts, etc. to the authorities in real time saving countless lives. None of that will be possible by removing the human driver from the vehicles.

The requirements for these tests should be at least as stringent as the requirements for a professional driver operating commercial vehicles on the streets with our families and the public at risk. Automated commercial vehicles and hauling is not an investment in the safety of citizens on the road, professional CDL truck drivers, or an investment in the future of skilled labor. Big corporations are attempting to substitute automation for skilled and professional drivers. The FMCSA and NHTSA have an obligation to the public, and public safety, not the profitability of corporate special interest groups. These agencies MUST NOT reconsider changing these rules to allow driverless vehicles on the road. The rules and conditions that would allow an automated driverless commercial motor vehicle to operate must be thoroughly investigated and regulated. These changes will affect peoples lives and reduce the safety of our public streets.