

Kevin Steichen - Comments

Docket number FMCSA-2018-0037

I have 22 years of experience out here on the road. Every day drivers on the road experience different challenges whether it be traffic, weather, breakdowns, etc. in my opinion there is no way you can program a computer (autonomous vehicle) to deal with those different challenges. Nothing can replace a human behind the wheel of a vehicle. Even if there is a person behind the wheel of the vehicle, the reaction time is going to be different than if they were in total control of the vehicle at all times. For example, lets say an autonomous truck has a steer tire blow out. What is that computer going to do? I my self have never had this happen, but I know people that have. They have told me that it will take the truck in many different directions. Even if there is someone behind the wheel, by the time they react, its too late. What happens when a sensor goes out, a wire corrodes, or a camera fails? Maybe someone has thought of these things I dont know, but I know I have. My family and friends are driving the same roads as the autonomous trucks would be. Quite frankly it scares the heck out of me that this is even being considered.

I sat in on a listening session at MATS in March 2018. The people that are making these autonomous trucks for the most part have no clue what we deal with on a daily basis. All they look at is the bottom line on their company and it seems like safety takes a back seat. The one company that spoke there is already running them, yes, but they have someone behind the wheel to take over if something were to happen. Whats going to happen if that driver falls asleep behind the wheel and the truck fails? Whos at fault if the truck is in autonomous mode and it gets into an accident? The driver or the truck? And how long until thousands of people are out of work because of this? How is the fmcsa going to regulate these trucks? Who is going to monitor the load? How is the truck going to know if a scale is open or closed? The list goes on.

I feel that there are too many unanswered questions to even consider the implementation of autonomous trucks. Safety of our highways is by far the most important thing that needs to be considered. The history thus far on autonomous vehicles, whether its cars or trucks, is not good right now. Look at Teslas!

In closing I think the FMCSA and the federal government needs to quit looking at technology as being safer. Yes there are certain things that can be safer, but if you really step back and look at it, mast of it hasnt. It has made the operator of the vehicle lazy and less attentive of their surroundings while driving. So I say a big NO to autonomous trucks and ask that these companies e held to a much higher standard than cmvs that are out here now. I do not feel that we as a country are even lose to being ready for anything self driving.