Testimony of the Alliance of Automobile Manufacturers
for the Joint Transportation Committee on
House Bill 6344 - Autonomous Vehicles

On behalf of the Alliance of Automobile Manufacturers (Alliance), thank you for the opportunity to submit comments on House Bill 6344. The Alliance is the leading trade association for passenger car and light truck manufacturers, representing 12 auto makers including BMW Group, Fiat Chrysler Automobiles, Ford Motor Company, General Motors Company, Jaguar Land Rover, Mazda, Mercedes-Benz USA, Mitsubishi Motors, Porsche Cars North America, Toyota, Volkswagen Group of America and Volvo Cars of North America.

The automobile industry has a long history of developing advanced technologies in a constant effort to improve vehicle safety and fuel efficiency. Advanced driver assist systems and crash avoidance technologies such as electronic stability control, lane monitoring, and self-parking systems are on the market today and are paving the way for the automated vehicles of the future. Fully automated vehicles are simply a future step on an already established continuum.

A handful of states have pursued legislation in an effort to encourage the research, testing, and operation of autonomous vehicles. The Alliance has been an active stakeholder in these discussions and has consistently argued that state-specific autonomous vehicle legislation is potentially more detrimental to the continued innovation of this technology than it is helpful. For this reason, the Alliance opposes HB 6344.

The Alliance's position is consistent with the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's Preliminary Statement of Policy Concerning Automated Vehicles (issued May 2013) which notes that states should proceed cautiously with any legislation in this area or risk impeding the development of this exciting new technology. Specific examples about the challenges associated with the legislation can be provided should the bill draft become available.

While the industry appreciates the states' interest in autonomous vehicle technology, we do not believe the time is ripe to pursue autonomous vehicle legislation. We are aware of no state law that would preclude the testing of autonomous vehicles on public roadways today, and thereby see no need for permissive legislation. From an auto manufacturer perspective, we have all the laws necessary to continue to advance the research and development of automated technology in a safe, responsible manner. House Bill 6344 would likely just have a stifling effect on autonomous vehicle activity in Connecticut.

Thank you for your time and consideration of the Alliance's comments.

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