

LEGAL UPDATES

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Service

Autonomous Vehicles

Industry

Transportation

Professionals

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Trump Administration Set to Revamp Regulatory Framework for Autonomous Vehicles

On April 24, 2025, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) announced that it is expanding the Automated Vehicle Exemption Program (AVEP) to allow domestically produced autonomous vehicles to qualify for exemptions to U.S. auto safety standards previously offered only to imported vehicles. The NHTSA will now begin to accept and process requests for vehicles built in the United States to receive Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standards (FMVSS) exemptions for non-commercial purposes that involve research or demonstration in accordance with 49 U.S.C. § 30114(a). The NHTSA will soon publish a notice in the Federal Register related to this exemption opportunity and solicit public comments.

In the April 24 initial action, the NHTSA also announced that it is updating an order put in place under the Biden administration that required carmakers and technology companies to report information about vehicle crashes involving the use of automated driving technologies. The NHTSA stated that the changes to this order will “maintain safety benefits of reporting while reducing unnecessary burdens.” The NHTSA further stated that it is “actively engaged in developing a multi-faceted regulatory framework” for vehicles with automated driving systems and is seeking “input to assist in identifying existing regulations, guidance, and other regulatory obligations that can be modified or repealed, to ensure that the Department [of Transportation] promotes the national interest and achieves meaningful burden reduction while continuing to meet statutory obligations and ensure the safety of the U.S. transportation system.”

What this means to you

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The immediate impact of the program updates is unclear; however, it is expected to provide broader incentives to manufacturers over time as the emerging framework for regulating self-driving vehicles takes shape.

Contact us

If you have questions regarding AVEP or the NHTSA's standing order, please contact Julie Maurer, Daniel Thiel, or your Husch Blackwell attorney.