Oregon Task Force on Autonomous Vehicles
Joanie Deutsch, Executive Director, Northwest, TechNet

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Chair Tannenbaum and Members of the Task Force:

On behalf of the member companies of TechNet, thank you for the opportunity to provide public comment. TechNet represents over 70 of the nation’s leading technology companies. Our diverse membership includes dynamic startups to the most iconic companies on the planet. Also included in our membership are leaders in autonomous vehicle development, including Waymo (formerly the Google Self Driving Car Project), General Motors, Uber, and Lyft, to name a few.

These comments are also on behalf of the Technology Association of Oregon, who unfortunately couldn’t be here for the public comment period.

The development of autonomous vehicles will enable tremendous societal benefits by improving vehicle safety and access to transportation for disabled people, the elderly, and others who cannot currently drive themselves. Fully autonomous vehicles will improve safety by reducing the severity and frequency of automobile accidents and will mitigate other inefficiencies of current motor vehicle use, such as congestion.

We support policies that encourage the safe deployment of fully autonomous vehicles on public roads in the United States.

HB 4063 charged this task force with developing recommendations regarding the deployment of autonomous vehicles on Oregon highways. The bill specified that not only does the proposed legislation need to be consistent with federal law and guidelines but also required it address the issues of licensing and registration; law enforcement and accident reporting; cybersecurity; and insurance and liability.

The legislation permitted the task force to study and consider potential long-term effects of autonomous vehicle deployment, yet specified that it be addressed in future legislation.

We are concerned that well-intentioned state policy frameworks will unintentionally stifle innovation and impede the safety benefits of this technology. We encourage this task force to avoid recommending policies that will create or maintain barriers to the testing, development, and deployment of this technology and the benefits that come with it.
Finally, we were disappointed that while the subcommittees on licensing and registration, and law enforcement and crash reporting, included industry representation; the subcommittees on cybersecurity and long-term policy, and insurance and liability, did not. While we understand that subcommittee meetings are open to stakeholders and other task force members to participate, we suggest task force meetings and subcommittees encourage active participation among stakeholders and task force members alike, and utilize the expertise and experience you currently have here in the state.

We look forward to working with you to craft policies that encourage the safe deployment of fully autonomous vehicles on public roads in Oregon.

Thank you.