Update from Autonomous Driving Work Group

Dr. Laura Schewel, Deputy Secretary of Transportation

Background – Automated Driving Working Group

HB2627 directed Virginia to study commercial deployment of SAE Level 4 automated driving system (ADS) vehicles.

- HB1124 (2026) added a workforce and labor impact assessment.

Goals

- Protect public safety
- Explore economic development and innovation potential
- Define state agency roles and resources
- Develop draft legislation.

Background – Automated Driving Working Group

Voting Members

- Senator Lamont Bagby
- Senator J.D. “Danny” Diggs
- Senator Kannan Srinivasan
- Delegate Terry Austin
- Delegate Jason Ballard
- Delegate Jackie Glass
- Delegate David Reid
- Delegate Briana Sewell
- Secretary of Transportation
- Virginia Department of Transportation
- Virginia Department of Motor Vehicles
- Virginia State Police

Support Staff

- Staff from DMV, VDOT
- Virginia Tech Transportation Institute (national policy review)
- Virginia Transportation Research Council (ADS safety reporting/standards)
- Knowledge Advisory Group (stakeholder engagement on labor impacts)

Structure

- 5 public working group meetings (well attended) since January 2026
- Many interviews, 1-1 calls, meetings with stakeholders, advocates, industry, and agencies.

Labor Research: 24 interviews and a 12-organization roundtable

How the labor and workforce findings were gathered

24

stakeholder interviews

12

organizations at a 90-minute roundtable – labor groups, agencies, and industry

Method. Three industries most likely to experience labor impacts sooner were identified

- Ride hailing/taxi,
- Commercial trucking,
- Public transit.

Stakeholders participated in 30-60min interviews. A roundtable then reviewed the interview findings and set priorities.

Open input. Written comments were also accepted through the workgroup's public input portal, and in public comment sessions in each Working Group meeting.

Analysis of OEWS data and ride hailing research to generate numbers of jobs impacted.

Source: Knowledge Advisory Group. (2026). Labor impacts of autonomous vehicles in Virginia [Presentation slides]. Autonomous Driving Workgroup, Office of the Secretary of Transportation, Commonwealth of Virginia. Aug. 28, 2026.

High-Level Working Group Conclusions

Safety: The best ADSs offer significant safety benefits in the right circumstances. However –this isn't true of all ADS in all circumstances.

Clear reporting requirements and standards can ensure that Virginia only permits safety-beneficial automated vehicles.

State agency roles: The DMV should oversee permitting (with input from many stakeholders).

Wherever possible, frameworks should utilize existing Virginia law.

Labor Impacts: Labor stakeholders agreed that AVs will directly displace many driving jobs. The jobs that could be created are very different than the jobs that could be lost.

Moving ahead with legislation: The working group recommended moving forward with legislation permitting some ADS.

The group reached a recommendation on most items, but could not make a recommendation on some items.

Should we move forward with legislation?

Working group recommendation: There should be two pieces of legislation in 2027.

1) Implement a permitting process for autonomous vehicles.

2) Continue the policy working group to publish analysis of the impacts of AVs on safety, traffic, labor and the economy and recommend policy solutions as needed.

The working group report and draft legislation will cover (1)

What should be permitted at this time?

Topic	Working group outcome
● **A) Levels of automation considered**	**Recommendation:** Legislation should be limited to SAE Level 4 vehicles. Level 3 changes, if any, can be handled separately.
● **B) Personal vs. Commercial Use**	**Recommendation:** Limit permits to commercial ADS-equipped vehicle use. (The legislation would remain silent on personally owned vehicles)
○ **C) Light duty, medium duty, and/or heavy duty vehicles**	**No recommendation was made regarding this matter.**

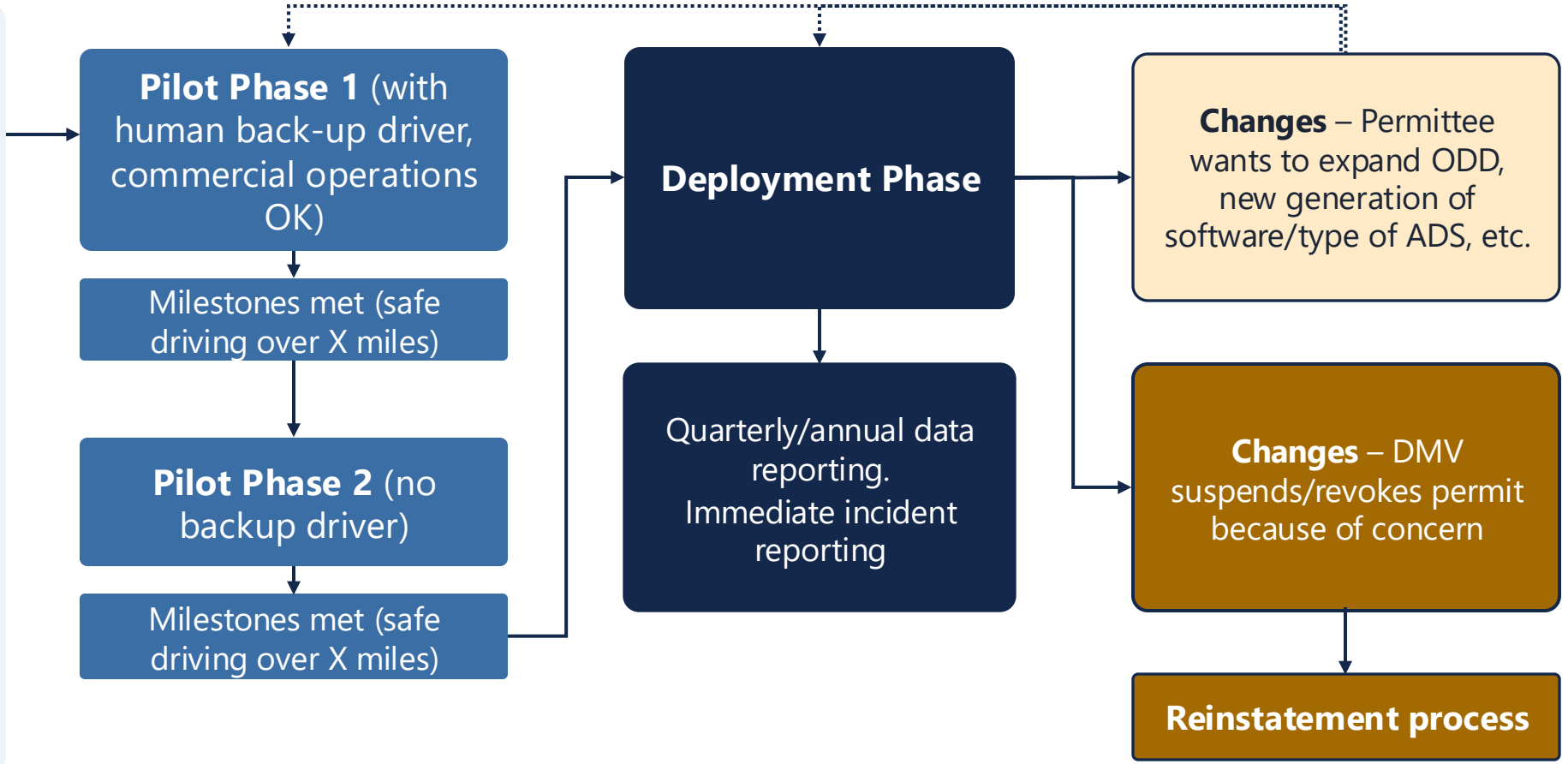
How to receive a permit?

Topic	Working group outcome
• **Vehicles covered under permit**	**Working Group Recommendation:** Business will apply to DMV. Permit will apply to like vehicles using the same Automated Driving System.
• **Pilots**	**Working Group Recommendation:** Require a pilot phase (See next slide).
• **Successful completion of pilot**	**Working Group Recommendation:** DMV will create regulation to define successful completion of a pilot focusing on safety performance measures.
• **Contents of permit application**	**Working Group Recommendation:** Proof of financial responsibility (same as nonADS vehicles), definition of Operational Design Domain (ODD), safety certifications, First Responder Interaction Plan, etc.

Recommended flow for permits

Permit Application

- Type of vehicle, ADS, software
- Self-certification
- Safety history
- Proof of coverage
- First responder Plan
- ODD
- Etc.



Working within Virginia Law where possible

Topic	Working group outcome
• **For-hire ADS-equipped vehicles within existing intrastate operating authority**	**Recommendation:** Do not balkanize operating authority by introducing new types of permits. Instead, establish rules of general application for all for-hire carriers of passengers and property who use ADS-equipped vehicles.
• **Local regulation**	**Recommendation:** No change to existing scope of local authority.
• **Privacy law**	**Recommendation:** Remain silent and rely on existing privacy law.

AV-specific updates

Topic	Working group outcome
• **Definitions**	**Working Group Recommendation:** Staff will define the proposed list of ADS-related terms as necessary in Code.
• **Titling and registration**	**Working Group Recommendation:** Vehicle registration should include flag for Automation capabilities.
• **Human driver general rules**	**Working Group Recommendation:** All drivers operating permitted ADS-equipped vehicles (in-vehicle or as remote) should be employed by permittee, have a drivers license in Virginia for the relevant type of vehicle, have training.

Oversight

	Topic	Working group outcome
○	**When can an agency revoke or suspend a permit prior to a hearing?**	Working group agrees that DMV should have the option to revoke or suspend a permit, with notice, a cure period, and a hearing. However, the working group **could not reach a consensus** about if DMV should be able to revoke or suspend before a hearing.
●	**Safety data required on an ongoing basis**	**Working Group Recommendation:** Data should be adequate to understand safety performance clearly, but should not create novel reporting requirements (see next slide).
●	**Establish a technical stakeholder committee**	**Working Group Recommendation:** Establish a committee for ~5 years consisting of key stakeholders to provide feedback on guidance documents, regulations, etc.

Oversight Data Requirements - Context

	Federal — NHTSA SGO 2021-01	California (13 CCR Arts. 3.7–3.8, as amended)	Pennsylvania (PennDOT guidelines; 75 Pa.C.S. ch. 85)	Nevada
Crash Reporting Timeline	1 day (fatality/injury); 5 days (tow/airbag); monthly (other)	10 days, standardized form	Initial report in 6 hours; follow-up in 24 hours	Standard timelines
Exposure (VMT)	~	AV miles filed on standardized machine-readable (.csv) templates	Semi-annual miles by roadway type & zip, operation type	Annual ride-hailing trips/revenue (confidential).
Non-crash events	~	Performance-relevant system failures and braking events	Draft: quarterly remote-operation latency stats; ODD-encounter counts (work zones, school zones, etc.)	None
Public availability	Public dataset, but PII obfuscated, other Confidential Business Info withheld.	Individual collision reports + annual report data published (per-manufacturer)	Not published	No public
RECOMMENDATION	**Require unredacted copy sent to VA**	**Require same data collection as CA**	**Add on PA requirement for roadway type, zip, operation type**	

Legal and Liability

Topic	Working group outcome
○ **Ban of mandatory arbitration clauses**	**No decision was made regarding this matter.**
• **Determining responsibility/liability**	**Working Group Recommendation:** If the ADS is fully engaged at the time, then the ADS is presumed to be the operator.

Financial and Labor

	Topic	Working group outcome
●	**Fees for ADS-equipped vehicle permits**	**Working Group Recommendation:** Fees should cover the agency costs of implementing and overseeing the permitting process. **No decision on if fees should cover additional impacts on labor.**
○	**Tax revenues for ADS-equipped vehicles – residency requirement**	**No decision was made regarding this matter but the working group noted it deserved additional careful consideration.**
○	**Retail sales and use taxes**	**No decision was made regarding this matter.**
●	**Location for remote assistance**	**Working Group Recommendation:** Permit remote assistance only from within the U.S.

Key labor concerns shared by labor stakeholders

Clear themes: Job loss, emphasizing their jobs are more than just driving, concern that new jobs will be too different, concern that AVs will be held to lower standards than CDL holders

Ride sharing (passenger vehicles)

- Rapid job and income displacement
- Drivers asked to train automated systems that will replace them
- Fewer human-driven options for riders who need door-to-door help
- "Replacement" jobs will not be the same

Commercial trucking

- Displacement of professional drivers
- Non-driving duties (inspections, customer service) are hard to automate
- Ensure AVs do not have lower safety standards than CDL
- "Retraining" jobs would be different, lower pay, or require skills current employees don't have

Public transit

- Displacement of professional drivers
- Continued need for staff in passenger assistance, customer service, and on-board safety
- Ensure AVs do not have lower safety standards than CDL
- "Retraining" jobs would be very different, lower pay

Mitigation ideas

Sample of ideas generated by interviewees

- Labor should have input before any deployment.
- Incremental deployment, with monitoring and oversight.
- Transition support: retraining, redeployment, and displacement funding.
- Ensure AVs truly are safer than professional drivers they replace.
- Driver shortages do exist in some of these industries –
  - First, make the jobs better.
  - Second, focus any AV deployment on the parts that are hard to staff.

What comes next?

November 2026: Publication of Working Group report

January/February 2027: Legislative session.

Ongoing: Monitoring updates from other states and federal agencies – as much is changing.

Thank you