AN ACT

To authorize autonomous vehicles to operate on District roadways, to require the Department of Motor Vehicles to create an autonomous vehicle designation, and to establish safe operating protocols for autonomous vehicles.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, That this act may be cited as the "Autonomous Vehicle Act of 2012".

Sec. 2. Definitions.
For the purposes of this act, the term:
(1) "Autonomous vehicle" means a vehicle capable of navigating District roadways and interpreting traffic-control devices without a driver actively operating any of the vehicle's control systems. The term "autonomous vehicle" excludes a motor vehicle enabled with active safety systems or driver- assistance systems, including systems to provide electronic blind-spot assistance, crash avoidance, emergency braking, parking assistance, adaptive cruise control, lane-keep assistance, lane-departure warning, or traffic-jam and queuing assistance, unless the system alone or in combination with other systems enables the vehicle on which the technology is installed to drive without active control or monitoring by a human operator.
(2) "Driver" means a human operator of a motor vehicle with a valid driver's license.
(3) "Public roadway" means a street, road, or public thoroughfare that allows motor vehicles.
(4) "Traffic control device" means a traffic signal, traffic sign, electronic traffic sign, pavement marking, or other sign, device, or apparatus designed and installed to direct moving traffic.

Sec. 3. Autonomous vehicles permitted.

An autonomous vehicle may operate on a public roadway; provided, that the vehicle:
(1) Has a manual override feature that allows a driver to assume control of the autonomous vehicle at any time;
(2) Has a driver seated in the control seat of the vehicle while in operation who is prepared to take control of the autonomous vehicle at any moment; and
(3) Is capable of operating in compliance with the District's applicable traffic laws and motor vehicle laws and traffic control devices.

Sec. 4. Vehicle conversion; limited liability of original manufacturer.

(a) The original manufacturer of a vehicle converted by a third party into an autonomous vehicle shall not be liable in any action resulting from a vehicle defect caused by the conversion of the vehicle, or by equipment installed by the converter, unless the alleged defect was present in the vehicle as originally manufactured.

(b) The conversion of vehicles to autonomous vehicles shall be limited to model years 2009 or later or vehicles built within 4 years of conversion, whichever vehicle is newer.

New
§ 50-2353

Sec. 5. Rules.

The Mayor, pursuant to Title 1 of the District of Columbia Administrative Procedure Act, approved October 21, 1968 (82 Stat. 1204; D.C. Official Code § 2-501 *et seq*.), shall issue rules on or before December 31, 2013, establishing a class of vehicles for autonomous vehicles and procedures and fees for the registration, titling, and issuance of permits to operate autonomous vehicles.

New
§ 50-2354

Sec. 6. Fiscal impact statement.

The Council adopts the fiscal impact statement in the committee report as the fiscal impact statement required by section 602(c)(3) of the District of Columbia Home Rule Act, approved December 24, 1973 (87 Stat. 813; D.C. Official Code § 1-206.02(c)(3)).

Sec. 7. Effective date.

This act shall take effect following approval by the Mayor (or in the event of veto by the Mayor, action by the Council to override the veto), a 30-day period of Congressional review as provided in section 602(c)(1) of the District of Columbia Home Rule Act, approved December 24, 1973 (87 Stat. 813; D.C. Official Code § 1-206.02 (c)(1)), and publication in the District of Columbia Register.