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# Opinion: Self-driving cars still need drivers. It's dangerous to say otherwise

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Self-driving cars are no longer a figment of our imagination, but their need for better safety measures is also a reality. We may have initially believed that autonomous cars addressed fears of driving in cities and on highways, but these vehicles are accidents waiting to happen and the destruction has already begun. Tesla announced in November they would start construction on a new research, maintenance and repair facility in Southfield, inevitably a job-creator in the greater Detroit area. But according to a 2022 report from U.S. safety regulators, automated tech was a factor in nearly 400 car crashes in 11 months, and 273 of those cars were Teslas. Last year, the California DMV accused autonomous vehicle giant Tesla of misleading consumers to believe the vehicles are more capable than they actually are. A bill in California, SB 1398, signed by the governor and now in effect, would block manufacturers from using misleading language that does not actually describe the capabilities of their cars.

The legislation redefines driver assistance features to explicitly define the features of the car which include lane-keep assist and parking assist. The legislation highlights that these actions are not possible without the "active control or monitoring of a human operator." Similar legislation should be passed in Michigan as well nationally. Currently, the issue is not necessarily the presence of these vehicles, but the speed with which manufacturers are trying to push them out and advertise them as completely autonomous — undoubtedly very appealing, but that is not what they are, and their capabilities and faults are being overshadowed by the excitement. In 2022, a Tesla owner using the autopilot feature was involved in a crash on the 405 freeway in Los Angeles and his car burst into flames, according to a report from Business Insider. The driver recounted that while his car was on autopilot, "it suddenly veered hard to the left and stopped against the wall." The driver reported several additional miscalculations and failures of the model. Another Tesla owner who witnessed the

crash dubbed the autopilot feature "the scariest ride you'll ever take." Tesla has often claimed it is "accelerating the world's transition to sustainable energy with electric cars, solar and integrated renewable energy solutions," but when it comes to self-driving technology, the company is accelerating the introduction of cars claiming autonomy but that are, so far, incapable of performing it. To avoid misleading information, self-driving car giants need to reevaluate the software being used to provide these features and recall the models that are responsible for the highest numbers of crashes and safety faults. Perhaps we are not yet ready for autonomous vehicles.

There is no good reason to push technology that cannot yet perform as advertised. The prioritization of sales over safety is plaguing many industries, but doing so in the autonomous vehicle industry is particularly dangerous. *Robert Weiner was a spokesman for the Clinton and Bush White Houses and the House Government Operations Committee under Chairman John Conyers and a member of the senior staff for Reps. Claude Pepper, Ed Koch and Sen. Ted Kennedy. Sophia Hosford is a policy analyst at Robert Weiner Associates and Solutions for Change.*