



# HOUSE BILL 814: Neighborhood Occupantless Vehicle.

**This Bill Analysis  
reflects the contents  
of the bill as it was  
presented in  
committee.**

2021-2022 General Assembly

|                       |   |                     |                             |
|-----------------------|---|---------------------|-----------------------------|
| <b>Committee:</b>     | Senate Transportation. If favorable, re-refer to Rules and Operations of the Senate | <b>Date:</b>        | September 21, 2021          |
| <b>Introduced by:</b> | Reps. Saine, Reives, Johnson  | <b>Prepared by:</b> | Wendy Ray<br>Staff Attorney |
| <b>Analysis of:</b>   | First Edition   |                     |                             |

**OVERVIEW:** House Bill 814 would define neighborhood occupantless vehicle as a type of fully autonomous vehicle used to transport goods without a human occupant and authorize its operation on highways with certain restrictions and equipment requirements.

**CURRENT LAW:** Chapter 20 of the General Statutes governs operation of motor vehicles on highways generally. Article 18 of Chapter 20 provides more specific regulation of fully autonomous vehicles. A fully autonomous vehicle is a motor vehicle equipped with an automated driving system that will not at any time require an occupant to perform any portion of the dynamic driving task when the system is engaged. The article addresses issues arising from not having a human operator occupying the vehicle with provisions such as not requiring a drivers license to operate the vehicle, making the registered owner of the vehicle responsible for moving violations, providing exemptions from unattended vehicle prohibitions, and requiring the vehicle to comply with certain requirements if involved in a crash.

**BILL ANALYSIS:** House Bill 814 would define a "neighborhood occupantless vehicle" as a specific type of fully autonomous vehicle that is low-speed and designed to transport cargo without an occupant. The bill would authorize a neighborhood occupantless vehicle to operate on highways subject to the following:

- Operating limitations. It would only be allowed on streets with speed limits of 45 mph or less, it would have to stay in the right lane or as far to the right as practicable, and it would have to pull over and allow faster vehicles to pass on a two lane highway when passing is unsafe and there are five or more vehicles immediately behind it.
- Equipment exemptions. It would not be subject to vehicle equipment requirements for equipment that supports a human driver but is not necessary for a vehicle operated exclusively by an automated driving system.

The equipment exemption would also be applicable to all fully autonomous vehicles designed to be operated exclusively and at all times by an automated driving system.

A violation of restrictions applicable to neighborhood occupantless vehicles would be an infraction.

Neighborhood occupantless vehicles would also be subject to general provisions in Chapter 20 applicable to operation of motor vehicles and to provisions applicable to fully autonomous vehicles under Article 18 of Chapter 20.

**EFFECTIVE DATE:** The act would become effective October 1, 2021.

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