



# HOUSE BILL 814: Neighborhood Occupantless Vehicle.

2021-2022 General Assembly

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| <b>Committee:</b>     |               | <b>Date:</b>        | February 23, 2022 |
| <b>Introduced by:</b> |               | <b>Prepared by:</b> | Wendy Ray         |
| <b>Analysis of:</b>   | S.L. 2021-179 |                     | Staff Attorney    |

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**OVERVIEW:** *S.L. 2021-179 defines neighborhood occupantless vehicle as a type of fully autonomous vehicle used to transport goods without a human occupant and authorizes its operation on highways with certain restrictions and equipment requirements.*

*The act became effective December 1, 2021.*

**CURRENT LAW:** Chapter 20 of the General Statutes governs the 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:** S.L. 2021-179 defines 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 act authorizes a neighborhood occupantless vehicle to operate on highways subject to the following:

- Operating limitations. It is only allowed on streets with speed limits of 45 mph or less, it has to stay in the right lane or as far to the right as practicable, and it has 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 is not 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 is also 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 is an infraction.

Neighborhood occupantless vehicles are also 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 became effective December 1, 2021.

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