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RESEARCH REPORT

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Ian R. Williams

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SAE EDGE™ Research Reports provide state-of-the-art and state-of-industry examinations of the most significant topics in mobility engineering. SAE EDGE™ contributors are experts from research, academia, and industry who have come together to explore and define the most critical advancements, challenges, and future direction in areas such as vehicle automation, unmanned aircraft, cyber security, advanced propulsion, advanced manufacturing, Internet of Things, and connectivity.

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About the Editor

Ian R. Williams is the inaugural fellow for the Law and Mobility Project at the University of Michigan Law School, and serves as the managing editor of the *Journal of Law and Mobility*. His current work deals with the relationship between the law and emerging mobility and transportation technologies, with a special focus on connected and automated vehicles. Ian's other areas of interest include privacy, civil liberties, and civil rights. He is most interested in the way emerging technology affects existing legal, political, and social structures, and the effect governmental use of such technology can have on the rights of individuals and communities. Ian was named a 2019 Internet Law & Policy Foundry Fellow and is a member of the Board of the Michigan Lawyer Chapter of the American Constitution Society.

Ian received his J.D. from the University of Michigan Law School, where he also received the Irving Stenn, Jr. Award for his leadership and contribution to the law school through extracurricular activities. While at Michigan, he served as the editor-in-chief of the *Michigan Telecommunications and Technology Law Review* (now the *Michigan Technology Law Review*), and was a proud member of *The Headnotes*, *Michigan Law*'s premier (and only) acappella group. As a law student he worked at the Center for Democracy & Technology and later the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights, both in Washington, DC. A native of the Chicago suburbs, he received his B.A. in political science with Highest Distinction from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Prior to law school, Ian worked in political media strategy and technology policy.

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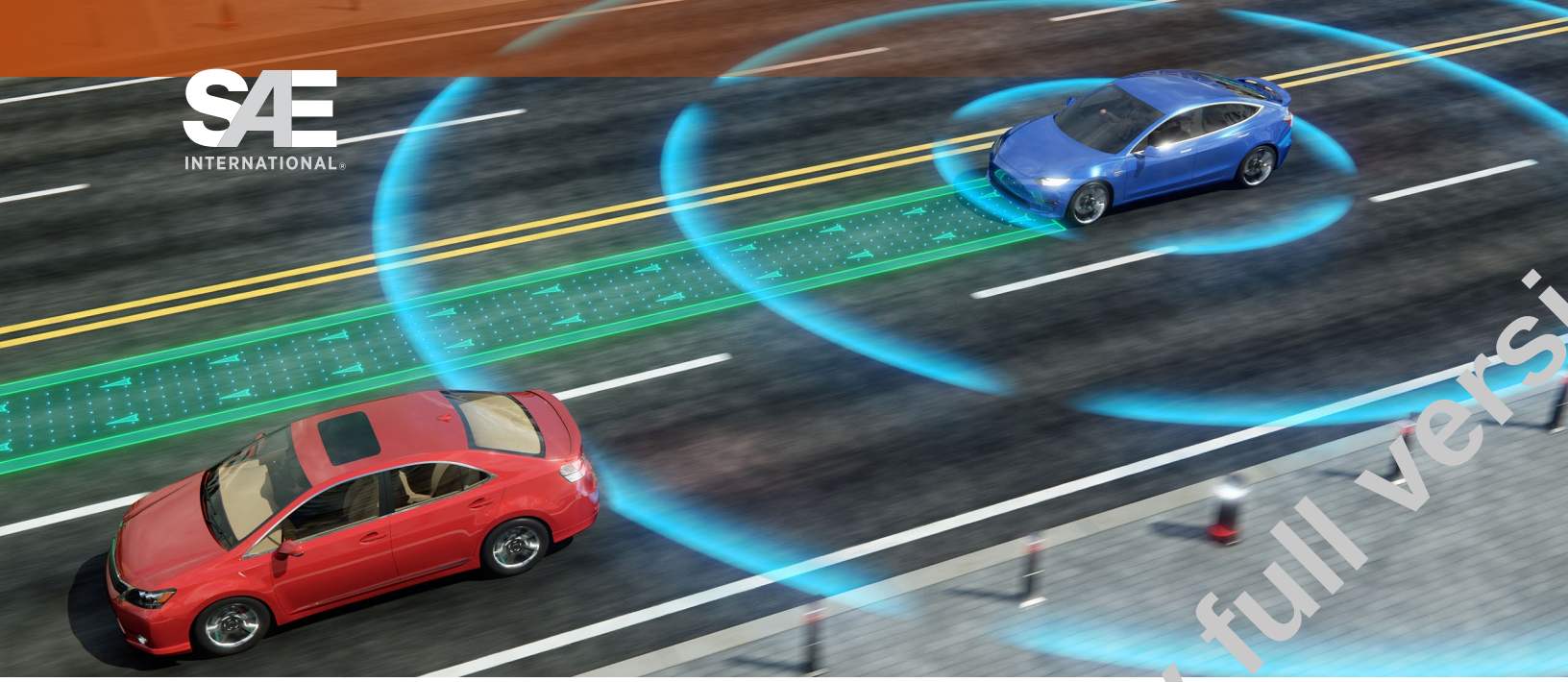

Unsettled Legal Issues Facing Automated Vehicles

Abstract

This SAE EDGE Research Report explores the many legal issues raised by the advent of automated vehicles. While promised to bring major changes to our lives, there are significant legal challenges that have to be overcome before they can see widespread use. A century's worth of law and regulation were written with only human drivers in mind, meaning they have to be amended before machines can take the wheel. Everything from key federal safety regulations down to local parking laws will have to shift in the face of AVs. This report undertakes an examination of the AV laws of Nevada, California, Michigan, and Arizona, along with two failed federal AV bills, to better understand how lawmakers have approached the technology. States have traditionally regulated a great deal of what happens on the road, but does that still make sense in a world with AVs? Would the nascent AV industry be able to survive in a world with fifty potential sets of rules? Given the current lack of a federal AV law, state-level legislation can have a great deal of influence over the industry. Beyond government regulation, what other areas of our legal system will have to adapt to AVs? How do we assign liability for an accident in which the only actors were machines? How do you give an AV a ticket? The questions are numerous and have already captured the imagination of lawyers and lawmakers. This report will explore a number of potential challenges facing the legal system, the unsettled aspects that derive from this new world, and the proposed solutions that have been raised.

NOTE: SAE EDGE™ Research Reports are intended to identify and illuminate key issues in emerging, but still unsettled, technologies of interest to the mobility industry. The goal of SAE EDGE™ Research Reports is to stimulate discussion and work in the hope of promoting and speeding resolution of identified issues. SAE EDGE™ Research Reports are not intended to resolve the challenges they identify or close any topic to further scrutiny.

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