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MDOT Submits Automated Vehicle Technology “Proving Grounds” Application to USDOT

Designation Allows for Future Testing and Deployment of Self-Driving Vehicles Along I-95 Corridor

HANOVER, MD – Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) Secretary Pete K. Rahn today announced that the state has submitted an application to the U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) to designate a portion of the Interstate 95 (I-95) corridor in Maryland as a future Automated Vehicle (AV) testing and deployment area. The application is in response to [USDOT's notice of intent](#) to designate a select number of “proving grounds” across the country, which will help accelerate the development of AV technology to achieve a better understanding of the long-term impacts of self-driving vehicles. Maryland's proposal includes the I-95 corridor from Aberdeen Proving Ground to the Fort Meade/University of Maryland region, and includes multiple public roadways, the Helen Delich Bentley Port of Baltimore, Baltimore/Washington International Thurgood Marshall Airport (BWI Marshall), and existing public/private research and testing facilities throughout this region.

“The I-95 Corridor in Maryland is the ideal one-stop-shop for real-world testing and deployment of autonomous vehicles,” said Transportation Secretary Rahn. “This corridor is strategically positioned along the thriving east coast and combines a wealth of existing facilities, along with unique testing opportunities at the Port of Baltimore and BWI Airport.”

Maryland's proposal takes advantage of existing development, testing, partnerships and investments in AV technology along the I-95 corridor and includes:

- Existing facilities already developing and testing AV technologies, including Aberdeen Proving Ground in Harford County, the Center for Entrepreneurship in Howard County, and the University of Maryland's Center for Advanced Transportation Technology Laboratory in Prince George's County;
- MDOT-owned facilities to provide future simulated and real-world testing environments, including the electronic toll lanes along I-95, the Port of Baltimore for freight operations, and BWI Marshall for passenger shuttle transportation; and
- Private-sector companies already planning development and manufacturing of AV components within the next two years.



Graphic of Maryland's Automated Vehicle Research and Production Corridor

The application does not allow immediate testing of self-driving vehicles on public roadways. Designated facilities should be ready to test AV technologies by January 1, 2018. Although no federal funding is associated with the initial designation, it could lead to future federal funding and economic development opportunities for Maryland. Eligible entities include test tracks/testing facilities, race tracks, cities/urban areas, highway corridors, and campuses.

“We are in the process of developing clear policies and procedures for companies eager to test AV technologies on public roads in Maryland,” said Christine E. Nizer, MDOT's Motor Vehicle Administrator and Chair of the Maryland Autonomous and Connected Vehicle Working Group. “Self-driving vehicles have the potential to transform how we live and work, and while we are open for business and eager to realize the life-saving and economic benefits of this innovative technology, we will always ensure safety comes first.”

The application follows the recommendations of the [Maryland Autonomous and Connected Vehicle Working Group](#), which was established by Secretary Rahn in December 2015. The Working Group handles strategic planning for MDOT concerning autonomous and connected vehicles. The group includes a diverse membership of transportation stakeholders, including elected officials, state and local agency representatives, highway safety organizations, representatives from the private sector and automotive industry. The group evaluates the latest research, tracks federal and state laws, policies and programs, and coordinates with other agencies, organizations and businesses to set the course for the future of automated and connected vehicles in Maryland.

USDOT will announce the initial list of AV Proving Grounds during the first quarter of 2017.

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