



SAN FRANCISCO DEPUTY SHERIFFS' ASSOCIATION

"Serving the Deputy Sheriffs' of San Francisco since 1952"

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June 23, 2023

Via Electronic Mail

California Public Utilities Commission

505 Van Ness Avenue

San Francisco, CA 94102

Re: Waymo and Cruise Robotaxis with Emergency Services, June 29th Agenda items 6 & 7

Dear Commissioners,

I am writing on behalf of the San Francisco Deputy Sheriffs' Association to express our deep concerns regarding the ongoing interference of Waymo and Cruise robotaxis with the crucial work of our city's fire and law enforcement departments. The safety and effectiveness of emergency response operations are being compromised, necessitating immediate attention to address these critical issues.

Recent incidents in San Francisco have highlighted the alarming encounters between robotaxis and first responders, resulting in potential dangers to the lives of both emergency personnel and the public they serve. Incidents have been reported where robotaxis have been observed driving into active emergency scenes and even parking on fire hoses, hindering the proper functioning of essential firefighting equipment. Such interference not only delays emergency response efforts but also poses a significant risk to the safety and well-being of all those involved.

In light of these concerns, we join the San Francisco fire chief and other city officials in urging the California Public Utilities Commission to take immediate action. Specifically, we request that the commission postpones any further consideration or approval of expanded operations for Waymo, Cruise, and other robotaxi companies until adequate measures are put in place to address the interference with emergency services.

Public safety should always be the top priority when introducing innovative transportation technologies like autonomous vehicles. While we acknowledge the potential benefits and advancements in mobility that robotaxis may offer, it is crucial to ensure that their integration into our city's transportation ecosystem does not impede or endanger the critical work performed by our fire and law enforcement departments.



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We propose a collaborative approach involving the California Public Utilities Commission, city officials, robotaxi companies, and representatives from emergency response departments. This approach would facilitate the development of comprehensive regulations, protocols, and safety measures that effectively address the challenges posed by robotaxis, thus minimizing their interference with emergency services.

By delaying the approval of expanded operations for Waymo, Cruise, and other robotaxi companies, we can collectively work towards finding practical solutions that prioritize public safety and enable the seamless coexistence of autonomous vehicles and emergency services. This period of evaluation and dialogue will ensure that the necessary safeguards are in place before further deployments are authorized.

The San Francisco Deputy Sheriffs' Association firmly believes that a thorough examination of these concerns and the implementation of appropriate safety measures will not only enhance emergency response capabilities but also safeguard the well-being of our community.

We appreciate your attention to this matter and look forward to working together to address the challenges posed by Waymo, Cruise, and other robotaxis. Your commitment to public safety and your willingness to consider the concerns of emergency service providers is crucial as we strive for a safer and more efficient transportation landscape in our city.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Ken Lomba
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