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SAN FRANCISCO FIRE FIGHTERS
- Local 798 -

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June 26, 2023

California Public Utilities Commission
Public Advocates Office
505 Van Ness Avenue
San Francisco, CA 94102

RE: Provisional Authorizations for Waymo & Cruise for Driverless Autonomous Vehicles Passenger Service Deployment Program.

Dear President Reynolds and Commissioners:

I am writing to you on behalf of the more than 1,500 members of San Francisco Firefighters Local 798 to urge you to remove items 6 and 7 from your June 29th Consent Agenda and defer approving these applications until further research can be done to understand the significant safety impacts of these vehicles.

Autonomous Vehicles have a demonstrated track record of interrupting response to emergency incidents and of making dangerous situations even worse. From April 2022 through May 2023, San Francisco Firefighters submitted 18 reports concerning instances of robot cars disrupting their efforts. The City and County of San Francisco has included a list of the reported incidents in their protest letter, including times when Autonomous Vehicles interfered with and delayed our apparatus responding to emergencies, blocked apparatus at active incidents, damaged equipment, and ignored emergency responders attempting to stop or move them.

Not included in that list was an incident that took place on June 9, 2023 when an Autonomous Vehicle blocked our emergency response to the mass shooting in San Francisco's Mission District. The shooting was a tragedy that was compounded by Cruise's driverless vehicle that impeded emergency apparatus responding to the scene. With serious emergencies, just a few seconds can mean the difference between life and

death. People understand this, and they cooperate with emergency response vehicles. Robot cars do not, and they sit cluelessly in the middle of the street or even worse.

It must be pointed out that your own CPUC agenda for Items 6 and 7 states:

“The positive and negative safety impacts of deployment of Autonomous Vehicles for passenger service are uncertain at this time.”

If your own staff conclusion is that the public safety impacts are uncertain, and firefighters, paramedics, EMTs, and police officers are all saying that the Autonomous Vehicles have a NEGATIVE impact on public safety, I do not understand why this matter is up for consideration at this time – let alone on the Consent Agenda.

Local 798 stands with our local elected officials, our public safety partners, and other San Francisco leaders in requesting that the CPUC defer the approval of these applications until more work is done to resolve the significant public safety concerns that these vehicles present for our emergency personnel. We cannot safely perform our service with the current conditions placed on these vehicles.

On behalf of the men and women of the San Francisco Fire Department and IAFF Local 798, I thank you for your very careful consideration of this important issue for our first responders.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Floyd K. Rollins II". The signature is written in a cursive style with a double underline at the end.

Floyd K. Rollins II

President

San Francisco Firefighters Local 798

CC:

Fire Chief Jeanine Nicholson
California Professional Firefighters
San Francisco Fire Commission