



TO Interested Parties

FROM Dave Metz and Lucia Del Puppo
FM3 Research

RE: California Voter Attitudes Toward AB 316

DATE August 25, 2023

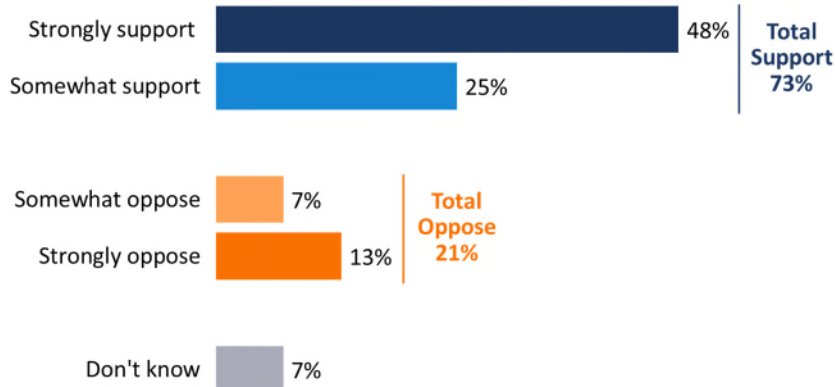
Fairbank, Maslin, Maullin, Metz & Associates (FM3) recently completed a survey of 1,007 California voters likely to cast a ballot in November 2024 regarding their attitudes toward AB 316, the bill to require human safety operators on self-driving vehicles weighing more than 10,000 pounds.ⁱ **The survey shows broad, strong and durable support for AB 316, rooted in voters’ awareness of debates around self-driving vehicles, and significant concerns about their safety – particularly in the case of heavy-duty vehicles.**

Key findings are as follows:

- **Nearly three-quarters of voters support legislation requiring human safety operators on self-driving vehicles weighing over 10,000 pounds.** Seventy-three percent of voters indicated support for the policy and 48% strongly support it. Only one in five oppose it (**Figure 1**).

Figure 1: Support for AB 316

The State Legislature is currently considering a bill to require that a trained, human safety operator be present in any autonomous, self-driving vehicle that weighs over 10,000 pounds on public roads and freeways in California. Would you support or oppose this bill?



Support for the legislation cuts across major demographic groups, including:

- ✓ 77% of Democrats, 72% of independents, and 64% of Republicans;
 - ✓ 73% of men and 72% of women;
 - ✓ 75% of voters ages 18-49, 70% of voters ages 50-64, and 72% of voters ages 65 and over;
 - ✓ 72% of voters with household incomes under \$100,000 per year, and 76% of voters with household incomes of \$100,000 or more; and
 - ✓ 75% of voters in LA County, 68% in the counties surrounding LA, 74% in the Bay Area, 78% in San Diego, 72% in Sacramento and the Rural North, and 70% in the Central Valley.
- **A broad majority of voters has heard news about self-driving cars recently, with most saying it has given them a more negative view of the technology.** Eighty-eight percent of respondents have heard, seen, or read about self-driving cars recently, with 40% saying they’ve heard a “great deal.” Fifty-seven percent of those voters say what they heard made them feel more negatively and only 15% say what they heard made them feel more positively.
 - **Accordingly, voters tend to view self-driving and autonomous vehicles unfavorably.** As shown in **Figure 2**, voters view self-driving and autonomous vehicles and trucks unfavorably by a wide margin, regardless of how they are described.

Figure 2: Favorability Ratings for Self-Driving Vehicles

I would like to ask your impressions of some people and organizations in public life. Please tell me whether your impression of that person or organization is generally favorable or unfavorable.

Description	Total Favorable	Total Unfavorable
Self-driving vehicles	33%	61%
Autonomous vehicles	32%	50%
Self-driving trucks	20%	62%
Autonomous trucks	17%	42%

- **While only one-quarter are comfortable sharing the road with a driverless vehicle without a safety operator, more than two-thirds are comfortable when one is present.** Twenty-five percent of voters say they are comfortable sharing the road with driverless vehicles and 72% are uncomfortable. However, when a human safety operator capable of taking control of the vehicle is present, 69% are comfortable with sharing the road and only 29% are uncomfortable (**Figure 3** on the next page).

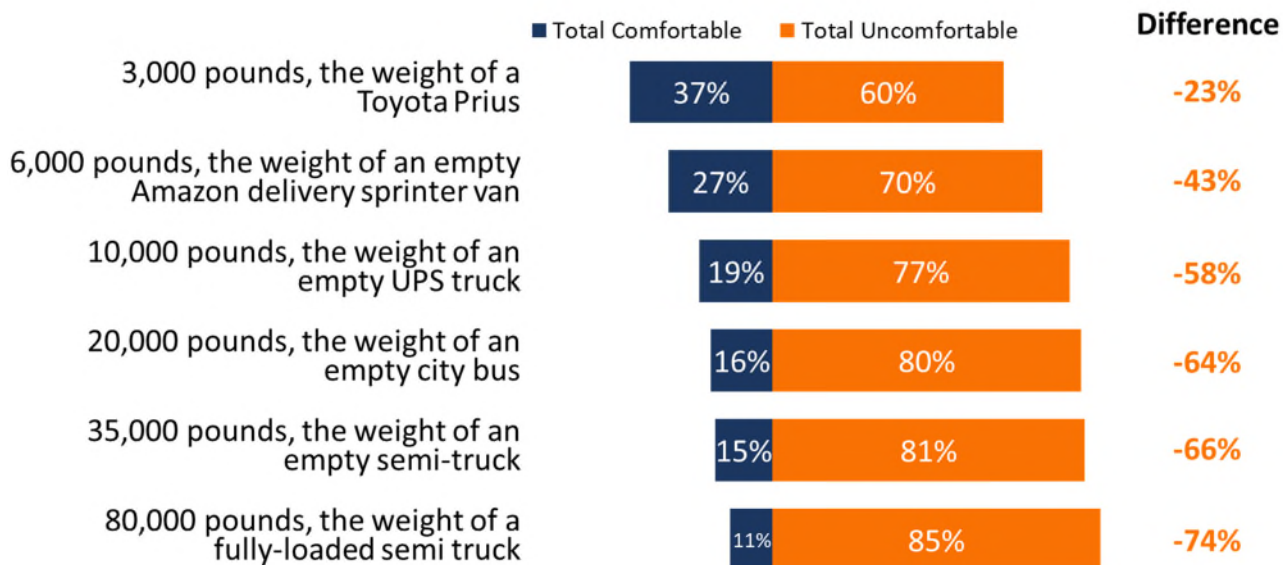
Figure 3: Comfort Sharing the Road with Driverless Vehicles

Comfort Level	Sharing the road with highly-automated, driverless vehicles	Sharing the road with highly-automated, driverless vehicles that also have a trained, human safety operator on board
Comfortable	25%	69%
Uncomfortable	72%	29%
Don't Know	3%	2%

- **Voters are even more uncomfortable sharing the road with heavy-duty self-driving vehicles.** As shown in **Figure 4**, most are uncomfortable with self-driving vehicles of any type, but as the weight of the vehicle increases, so does their discomfort.

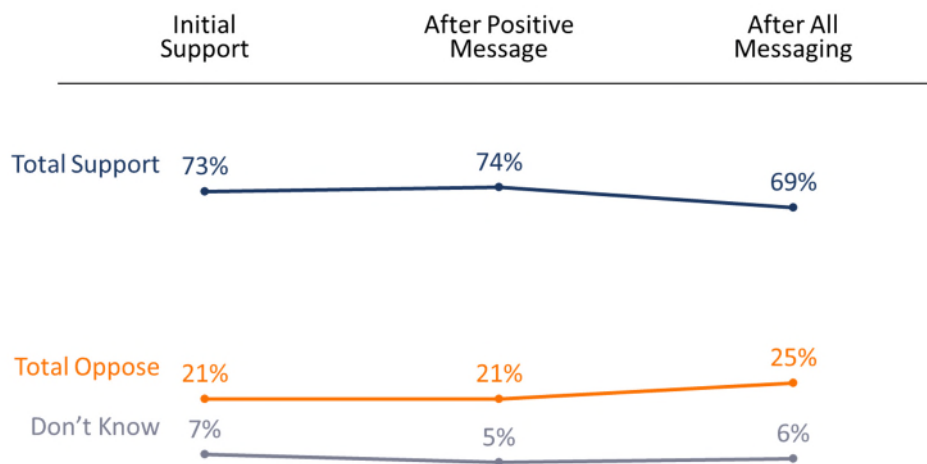
Figure 4: Comfort Level with Self-Driving Vehicles of Various Weights

Here is a list of specific weights that vehicles on California roads may have. How comfortable would you be with allowing entirely driverless vehicles of each weight operating on California roads and freeways: very comfortable, somewhat comfortable, not too comfortable, or not at all comfortable.



- **Support for AB 316 remains consistently high after voters hear pro and con messaging.** After positive messaging, 74% indicate support for the proposed bill and after a series of critical statements, 69% continue to offer support for the policy.

Figure 5: Support After Messaging



- **A majority would be more likely to vote for a state elected official who supports AB 316.** Fifty-one percent say they would be more likely to vote for an elected official who supports the requirement; 21% say it would make them less likely to support them and 22% say it would make no difference.

Figure 6: Impact of AB 316 on Support for Elected Officials

Suppose that a state elected official supported this bill to require a trained, human safety operator be present in any autonomous, self-driving vehicle that weighs over 10,000 pounds on public roads and freeways in California. Would that make you more or less likely to vote for them?

Position	Percent of Voters
Total More Likely	51%
Total Less Likely	21%
Makes No Difference	22%
Don't Know	6%

Overall, the results show pervasive public discomfort with self-driving trucks, and strong support for the presence of a human safety operator that cuts across the electorate’s major demographic and geographic groups.

ⁱ **Methodology:** From August 12-21, 2023, FM3 completed 1,007 online and telephone interviews with California voters likely to cast a ballot in the November 2024 election. The margin of sampling error for the study is +/-3.1% at the 95% confidence level; margins of error for population subgroups within the sample will be higher. Due to rounding, not all totals will sum to 100%.