



CAVI Calls for a Trans-Canada Autonomous Truck Project

Ottawa, ON, May 27, 2025 – The Canadian Automated Vehicle Initiative (CAVI) is calling on Canada to launch a Trans-Canada Autonomous Truck Demonstration Project. A driverless tractor-trailer would drive itself from Halifax to Vancouver in 2028.

The project would create high-value jobs in the Canadian technology sectors and demonstrate export opportunities for Canadian autonomous vehicle expertise. By establishing a successful Trans-Canada demonstration, this initiative will generate a substantial economic impact through technology development, job creation, and enhanced supply-chain efficiency.

There are four reasons why this proposal should be a priority for Canada.

First, Canada has extensive expertise in Connected and Automated Vehicles (CAVs), but in separate pockets across the country. These areas of excellence includes AI, communications, CAV pilots and testing, and more. There are also existing CAV truck demonstration projects, but on a limited geographic scale. The proposed project would integrate all these separate innovative initiatives into a nation-building project.

Second, this synchronizes very well with the federal government's vision of increasing inter-provincial trade, which is made challenging by the critical shortage of long-distance truck drivers. According to the Canadian Trucking Alliance, there are currently over 25,000 unfilled positions.

Third, this also aligns with Canada's broader strategy to establish leadership in artificial intelligence and position the country as a global competitor in autonomous vehicle technology with other nations. Prime Minister Carney's appointment of a Minister for AI and Digital Innovation signals the government's commitment to these emerging technologies. Innovation has a substantial impact on the economy; it drives productivity and higher productivity leads to economic growth. GDP per capita as a measure of living standards increases with economic growth. and will benefit all Canadians. The Government of the UK is a strong advocate of this approach and says *both the self-driving vehicle and artificial intelligence (AI) sectors bring huge potential for economic growth as they develop*.

Finally, this project builds on Canada's existing strengths while addressing public concerns about automated-driving safety. The demonstration would showcase Canadian leadership in developing robust CAV systems and promote public understanding of the benefits and limitations of CAV technology and foster social acceptance.

Barrie Kirk, P.Eng. President of CAVI, said "A Trans-Canada Autonomous Truck Demonstration Project like this is technically feasible. A key objective will be to work with the provinces to agree on a single nationwide regulatory system for autonomous trucks, rather than a patchwork-quilt approach."

Next Steps

CAVI proposes the following next steps:

First, we propose that the Prime Minister and the Ministers of Transport, Industry, and AI and Digital Innovation announce that the Federal Government supports the vision for this project.

Second, an organization that can represent all levels of government, industry, academia and other groups be appointed to lead this project, with a governance structure that includes all the major stakeholder groups.

Third, this organization then forms a team that consults with stakeholders across Canada and develops a detailed plan and budget.

Safety

In this project, safety is paramount. To achieve this, the proposed project will:

- Ensure that the truck has a "chaperone" driver at all times
- Conduct the trip in summer. A winter version can be conducted later.
- Follow a route in southern Canada. A subsequent version of the project can include the Territories.
- Include significant publicity that informs the public.
- Have test runs in individual regions as rehearsals for the final, integrated Trans-Canada trip.

Canadian Automated Vehicle Initiative

CAVI (www.cavi-icva.ca) serves as the national focal point for Canada's CAV ecosystem. Established as a collaborative platform, CAVI brings together stakeholders from three levels of government, industry, academia, and civil society to shape Canada's CAV future. The eleven-person Board of Directors, with representation spanning from British Columbia to Nova Scotia, reflects the truly national scope of this initiative.

CAVI's mission is to accelerate Canada's transition to CAV technology while ensuring this transformation benefits all Canadians. CAVI's stakeholders are involved in all aspects of the research, development, testing, deployment, and use of connected and automated vehicles.

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