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552(B)(6)

ZOOX INC 1149 CHESS DR
FOSTER CITY, CA 94404

DATE:

6.5.25

TO:

Peter Simshauser
Chief Counsel
National Highway Traffic Safety Administration
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590-0001

Re: Request for Exemption under 49 U.S.C. § 30114

Dear Mr. Simshauser,

Zoox, Inc. ("Zoox") hereby requests an exemption under 49 U.S.C. § 30114 to operate the following Automated Driving System-Dedicated Vehicles ("ADS-DVs") on public roads as part of a robotaxi service demonstration program:

Make: Zoox
Model: Zoox sedan
Model Year(s): 2024 and 2026
GVWR: 3,000 kg
Vehicle Type: sedan
VIN(s) or S/N: see Appendix 1

Zoox was founded in 2014 to make personal transportation safer, cleaner, and more enjoyable. To realize that vision, we are building a fleet of fully autonomous, all-electric vehicles optimized for ridesharing in cities. That means we are developing the vehicle, automated driving system (ADS), and service all together. We own the vehicle fleet and are responsible for daily operations, including fleet management, maintenance and repair, fleet routing and optimization, teleguidance, and customer support. Because we are not selling our vehicles to third parties, they will remain in our direct control at all times, allowing us to maintain the focus on day-to-day operational safety. Likewise, because we retain direct control of the fleet, should the need arise, we will have the ability to swiftly and completely resolve any safety or operational concerns.

Safety is foundational at Zoox, and our emphasis on safety led us to challenge ourselves, from the beginning, to design our robotaxi to comply with all applicable Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standards

(FMVSS). While we respectfully maintain that our certification of these vehicles was made in good faith under a reasonable and logical reading of the FMVSS,¹ we recognize that NHTSA's position is that certain human operated controls (e.g., hand and foot controls) and human driving visibility aids (e.g., windshield wipers and mirrors) are required for ADS-DVs, and its belief is that the robotaxi is not compliant with its reading of these standards.² After recent conversations with the agency, we have decided to submit this request for exemption in order to resolve this matter. We are making this request with the understanding that Zoox will continue to operate its existing robotaxis on public roads during the pendency of the exemption. It is also with the expectation that, upon issuance of a permission letter, the concerns expressed in Audit Query 23-001 will be fully resolved.

Turning to the specifics of this request and its associated demonstration program, Zoox intends to provide a robotaxi service to a select, invited group of prospective riders, evaluate and learn from early rider experience, and demonstrate the merits of providing a ridehail service with our purpose-built vehicle. Zoox will operate the robotaxis on public roads in Foster City and San Francisco, California, and Clark County, Nevada (including Las Vegas), where it is already operating the robotaxis, and eventually in Austin, Texas, and Miami, Florida. The robotaxis will be operated in urban environments, including operations near other road users (including motor vehicles, pedestrians, and bicyclists), and while transporting members of the public in accordance with our state permits. As part of this demonstration, Zoox will not receive any revenue directly from customer fares through the Zoox mobile application.³

The requested duration for this exemption is a minimum of 52 weeks; however, Zoox may pursue an amendment to shorten or lengthen the duration of the demonstration exemption for reasons such as: (i) either Congress passes legislation or NHTSA issues a final rule amending the FMVSS that impacts

¹ See Zoox Response to Inspection Report.

² NHTSA has previously recognized that a driver's seat and at least some manually operated driving controls are not required, which could be seen as creating ambiguity surrounding these requirements. To the extent NHTSA was inclined to clarify and/or resolve such ambiguity efficiently and effectively, Zoox believes NHTSA could use its interpretation authority, although we understand it is NHTSA's current position that an exemption is the only mechanism to do so.

³ Commercial activities are not expressly prohibited by section 30114. See Ltr. from J. Womack to W. Muerer (Aug. 30, 1995) available at <https://www.nhtsa.gov/interpretations/nht95-48> (allowing a waiver from the prohibition on leasing in 591.7(c), NHTSA said "section 30114 imposes no limitations on the agency's exemption authority"). NHTSA has more recently recognized that it could allow companies to "engage in some types of commercial operations as long as that commercialization did not undermine the public purposes for which the exemption was issued." ADS-Equipped Vehicle Safety, Transparency, and Evaluation Program, Notice of Proposed Rulemaking, 90 Fed. Reg. 4130 (Jan. 15, 2025).

the appropriateness of an exemption;⁴ (ii) Zoox submits an exemption request under Part 555 that includes vehicles covered by this exemption request;⁵ or (iii) Zoox makes design changes that obviate the purported need for this exemption.

In further support of this request, Zoox submits the following confidential attachments:


- Appendix 2: Robotaxi details
- Appendix 3: Automated Driving System (ADS) details
- Appendix 4: Operations details

Additional relevant information can be found in our Voluntary Safety Self-Assessments: (i) Purpose-Built for Safety: Introducing Zoox Safety Innovations (2021); and (ii) Operational Safety: Processes for Safety Design and Operation (2024), both of which are available at zoox.com/safety.

We appreciate the agency's recent efforts to facilitate innovative activities on public roads and our productive engagement on this topic to date. We were especially encouraged by your April 24, 2025 notice, opening the existing Autonomous Vehicle Exemption Program to domestic manufacturers such as Zoox, as well as the agency's commitment to ensuring the processes for exemptions work effectively. We look forward to continuing to work with you on this request, and as the agency continues to develop its regulatory framework for ADS-equipped vehicles.

For questions regarding the specifics of this request or any of the attached content, your team may contact Amanda Prescott, Sr. Director, Homologation at aprescott@zoox.com or Beth Mykytiuk, Associate General Counsel & Director, Product & Regulator at bmykytiuk@zoox.com.

Sincerely,



Chris Nalevanko
General Counsel,
Vice President, Secretary

⁴ Zoox understands that there has been, or will be, relevant AV legislation introduced in Congress and that the agency is actively pursuing updates to the FMVSS, either of which could clarify and resolve certain ambiguities that have arisen following the 2022 occupant protection final rule - specifically, with respect to human operated controls and visibility aids - and such updates may therefore resolve any compliance questions surrounding our original certification.

⁵ Zoox understands that NHTSA has committed to allowing the robotaxis that are the subject of this exemption request to be added to a future Part 555 exemption request. Zoox may pursue both exemptions simultaneously, with dedicated demonstration and commercial fleets.

cc: Andrew Magaletti
Chief, Automation Exemptions Division

NHTSA Note:

Attachments withheld in full due to a request for treatment as confidential business information.