CHAMBER OF PROGRESS

January 4, 2023

Douglas Ito, Director
Consumer Protection and Enforcement Division
California Public Utilities Commission
505 Van Ness Avenue
San Francisco, CA 94102-3214

Re: Response Letter Chamber of Progress Support to Cruise AL

Dear Director Ito:

On behalf of the Chamber of Progress, a tech industry association committed to ensuring that all Americans benefit from technological leaps, I write to express our support for Cruise's application to expand its operations in San Francisco under the CPUC Driverless AV Passenger Service Deployment program. Cruise has demonstrated a commitment to responsible operations through continued efforts to build a positive working relationship with state and local authorities to address concerns raised, and has driven hundreds of thousands of miles without any major incidents.[1]

The widespread commercial use of Cruise's autonomous vehicles has the potential to positively impact our communities – including improving safety, promoting sustainability, mitigating transit gaps, combating food deserts, and increasing mobility for the elderly and disabled.

Autonomous vehicles will bring safer streets and reduce the number of accidents. Between 2019 and 2021, traffic deaths and fatalities in the United States rose by 17.5 percent - the largest two-year increase since World War II.[2] Research shows that at least 90% of car crashes are caused by human error, and studies suggest that putting AVs on the road now could save hundreds of thousands of lives over the long term.

Recently, Cruise released a comprehensive Safety Report which outlines its transparent and comprehensive approach to safety.[3] Cruise also has worked with first responders to

[1]Dr. Louise Zhang, The Cruise Safety Report, (Nov. 2022) https://getcruise.com/news/blog/2022/the-cruise-safety-report-advancing-our-safety-mission-through-a-transparent-and-holistic-approach/
[2]David Leonhardt, Vehicle Crashes, Surging, (Feb. 2022), https://www.nytimes.com/2022/02/15/briefing/vehicle-crashes-deaths-pandemic.html
[3] Dr. Louise Zhang, Cruise Safety Report, (2022) https://getcruise.com/news/blog/2022/the-cruise-safety-report-advancing-our-safety-mission-through-a-transparent-and-holistic-approach/

provide guidance on how to safely identify and interact with its AVs. Additionally, the company has on-field recovery teams to ensure passenger and road safety during congestion and other situations.

Autonomous vehicles can positively impact the environment and promote sustainability efforts. Through high-speed driving, braking, and re-acceleration, humans burn a lot of gas and energy while driving.[4] According to the Southwest Research Institute, through connectivity and automation, vehicles can reach 20% improvement in fuel efficiency.[5] Since autonomous vehicles are programmed to follow traffic rules and speed limits, autonomous vehicles will ultimately burn less gas and energy.

Autonomous vehicles will help mitigate transit gaps. Traditional transit systems have historically contributed to inequality for disadvantaged minority and disabled communities. Research shows that Black people are more likely to rely upon public transportation accounting for 60% of all public transit riders. In addition, Black and Brown people are more likely to experience commutes to work that are 60 minutes or longer, one way.

Autonomous vehicles will help to combat food deserts. Residents in low-food access areas continue to be plagued by the food desert crisis and are forced to travel far away to get to grocery stores. In some communities, AVs are delivering groceries and food via low-speed, seatless, passengerless autonomous vehicles. With this technology, residents that live outside food-rich areas have the same convenient and affordable access to fresh fruits, vegetables, milk, and meat they need to live happily and healthily.

For years Cruise has been using its zero-emission fleet of all-electric, self-driving vehicles to support communities in need. Cruise partnered with the SF-Marin Food Bank and SF New Deal to deliver 2.3M+ meals to those in need. The meal delivery effort is integral to their social impact program Cruise For Good, which dedicates 1% of its fleet to serving local communities. We're confident that Cruise will continue its community-minded focus as they seek to expand to other parts of the city and state.

Autonomous vehicles will increase mobility for the elderly and disabled. For the blind and other people living with disabilities, safe autonomous vehicles can't arrive fast enough. 13.4 million Americans between the ages of 18 and 64 have self-reported travel limiting disabilities.[6]

---

[4]Ashleigh Rose-Harman, *The Environmental Benefits of Driverless Cars*, Greener Ideal, (Nov. 2021), https://greenerideal.com/news/vehicles/driverless-cars-environmental-benefits/.

[5]*SwRI Achieves 20% Improvement in Vehicle Fuel Efficiency with Connectivity, Automation*, Southwest Research Institute, (Nov. 2021) https://www.swri.org/press-release/vehicle-fuel-efficiency-improvement-connectivity-automation-arpa-e-nextcar .

[6] Travel Patterns of American Adults with Disabilities, U.S. Department of Transportation, Bureau of Transportation Statistics (Jan. 2022) https://www.bts.gov/travel-patterns-with-disabilities

For these reasons, we're proud to support Cruise's application and respectfully ask that you approve its application to expand its services in San Francisco. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Jamie Pascal
Director of Civic Innovation Policy
Chamber of Progress

cc: Alice Reynolds, President, CPUC
Cliff Rechtschaffen, Commissioner, CPUC
Genevieve Shiroma, Commissioner, CPUC
Darcie Houck, Commissioner, CPUC
John Reynolds, Commissioner, CPUC
Christine Hironaka, Deputy Cabinet Secretary, Governor's Office
Mark Tollefson, Deputy Cabinet Secretary, Governor's Office