Uber approved to restart self-driving tests in Pennsylvania

Uber has been given the green light by Pennsylvania officials to restart its self-driving car tests on public roads. The program was shut down last March after a self-driving Uber vehicle struck and killed a pedestrian in Tempe, Arizona. The crash was the first death attributed to a self-driving car, and it was seen as a significant setback for the industry, which is racing to get autonomous vehicles into commercial use.

Pennsylvania's Department of Transportation approved Uber's request to start testing autonomously in Pittsburgh, where its Advanced Technologies Group is headquartered, according to *The Information*. The news comes a few days after the tech site reported that a former Uber manager sent an 890-word email to some of the company's executives that raised safety concerns about its autonomous vehicle program just days before the fatal crash in Tempe.

An Uber spokesperson confirmed that PennDOT granted the approval, but cautioned that the company has yet to restart its testing. "We received our letter of authorization, yes but we haven't put cars back on the road yet," she said.

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In July, Pennsylvania's Department of Transportation issued guidance for safety oversight of highly automated vehicles. The voluntary guidance directs self-driving companies to submit a "notice of testing." The state will collect data on a semiannual basis, including the approximate miles traveled by

a company’s automated vehicles in the state. Around that same time, Uber’s self-driving cars returned to the streets of Pittsburgh, albeit in manual mode only.

In November, Uber released its to the US National Highway Traffic Safety Administration on Friday. In it, Uber commits to resuming testing with two employees in each autonomous vehicle, enabling automatic braking, and strictly monitoring safety drivers. The company said it now has real-time third-party monitoring of backup safety drivers, it sets limits on the amount of time drivers can work per day, and it has improved training.

https://www.theverge.com/2018/12/18/18147114/uber-self-driving-test-approved-restart-pennsylvania