

Calif. doing away with raised highway marker

By Tony Bizjak, Sacramento Bee

California's iconic Botts Dot, the bump that warns you're drifting out of your lane, has reached the end of its road.

After more than a half century of service, the safety device created by Elbert Botts in a Sacramento lab and once described by a state official as a loyal old dog, is expected to be relieved of duty sometime this year. The classic white ceramic dot, a notable innovation in its day, appears to be a bad fit as a lane marker in the emerging new world of driverless cars that rely on cameras, radar and computers to "read" and understand lane lines.

Although automated vehicles can be taught to "see" a variety of lane markings, including dots, federal officials and the vehicle industry say they want more uniformity nationally on lane lines. Given that few states outside of California still employ the original cookie-shaped ceramic Botts Dot, the writing is on the wall.

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