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(54) Title: AUTOMATICALLY DEPLOYABLE VEHICLE SAFETY GUARD

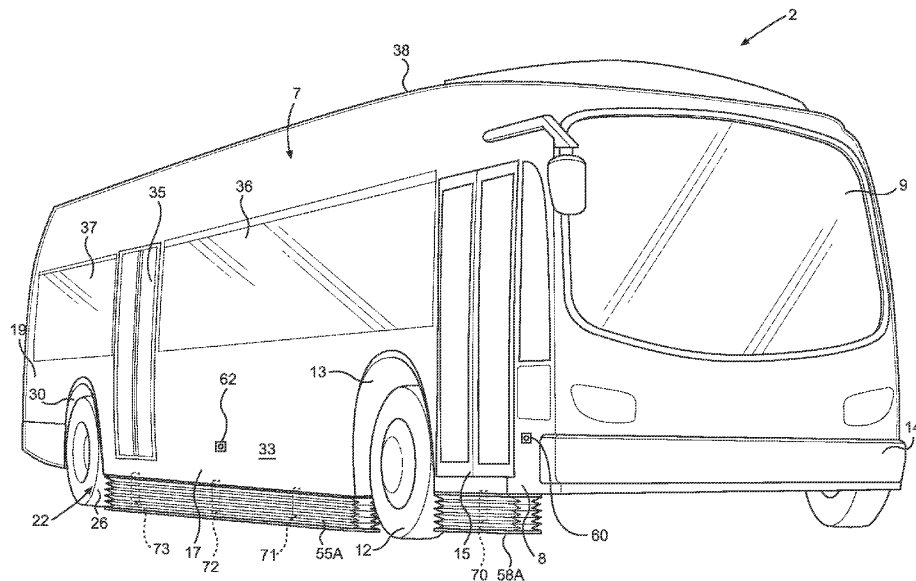


FIG. 3

(57) Abstract: A safety guard (55; 58) is configured to extend below a body (7) of a vehicle (2) for engaging animate and inanimate objects in order to prevent the objects from going under the vehicle (2). A detection system is provided, including a plurality of sensors (60, 62) configured to sense objects about the vehicle (2), and a controller (288) for analyzing for the possibility of at least an animate object going under the vehicle (2). The analysis can result in repositioning of the safety guard (55; 58) from a raised, retracted position during normal operation of the vehicle (2) to a lowered, deployed position in establishing a physical barrier spaced from a road surface a distance which prevents animate objects from entering under the vehicle (2). The analysis can also result in the issuance of an audible or visual warning (300) and/or the automatic control of at least one other vehicle control system.

[Continued on next page]

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