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THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

Testimony of Delegate Jazz Lewis on Motor Vehicles - Autonomous Vehicles - Standards, Requirements, and Prohibited Acts

For the record, Delegate Jazz Lewis here to testify on my legislation, HB1447, which is a bill establishing that should autonomous vehicles be on our roads, then there must be a human driver behind the wheel of the vehicle who can step in should the self-driving car malfunction for any reason. This is a common-sense safety measure for this new and emerging technology; having someone who can step in, should the autonomous driving function fail, can prevent accidents, avoid injuries, and ultimately save lives.

This is especially important for commercial vehicles, self-driving semi-trucks could cause massive accidents on our road should their software fail. This is also an industry that could see massive job losses if we move from human drivers to this still-developing technology. Putting truck drivers out of good-paying jobs that their families depend on without any alternatives when companies decide that they would prefer to have automated vehicles. This legislation ensures that we have licensed professionals who are equipped to respond in case of emergencies should an autonomous truck malfunction or respond poorly to any number of traffic situations.

But this bill is not just about preserving the jobs of hardworking Marylanders; it is about traffic safety. This new and emerging vehicle is still developing, and companies are still struggling to make these vehicles work in normal traffic situations. I have attached for the committee's awareness a list of incidents from across the country that serve as examples of the dangers that these vehicles can be to pedestrians, and other drivers. Mandating that a licensed driver be present to avoid any collisions ensures there is an additional safeguard in place.

For the record, I am not here to oppose autonomous vehicles outright. But I have deep concerns that I am sure I share with many in this room and beyond, with sharing the

road with a technology that is still being tested by having AV's use our neighborhood roads and state highways as testing grounds. We should not let our enthusiasm for something new and innovative get in the way of basic safety measures that can protect lives, especially when it comes to commercial vehicles that have a higher likelihood of deadly accidents simply due to their size and weight. Not only will self-driving commercial vehicles put thousands out of their jobs, but it will make us less safe if we take these professionals out of their trucks and off the roads.

We are working on amendments to the bill to ensure that this bill is specifically confined to commercial autonomous vehicles, which we think makes this more directed to those vehicles that pose a greater public safety risk as well as protecting jobs for hard-working Marylanders. I will be happy to provide these amendments to the committee when they are ready.

This legislation is about preserving public safety by having some commonsense guardrails for a still-developing technology that could have massive implications for all of us who commute by car. Ensuring we do not let new and emerging technology throw thousands out of work while unnecessarily putting Maryland drivers at risk.

Thank you and for these reasons I urge a favorable report.

With best,

Delegate Jazz Lewis

Resources:

As AV technology has developed, there have been many deeply concerning incidents of these vehicles threatening public safety and have shown that self-driving cars are simply not ready to be sharing the roads without a human safety operator in the vehicle.

- Waymo autonomous vehicle hits bicyclist in San Francisco. [Link Here](#)
- Federal regulators open investigation into GM self-driving car subsidiary Cruise. [Link Here](#)
- Cruise's driverless car accident underlines the risks of AI. [Link Here](#)
- Self-driving car company Waymo issues first-ever recall after two Phoenix crashes. [Link Here](#)
- Self-driving Cruise vehicle accused of nearly hitting kids in two separate close calls one day apart. [Link Here](#)
- Cruise offers to pay \$112K in fines over allegations it misled regulators about driverless car. [Link Here](#)
- Report: Tesla autopilot involved in 736 crashes since 2019. [Link Here](#)
- US regulators investigate GM's Cruise division over incidents involving pedestrians in roadways. [Link Here](#)
- Cruise stops all driverless taxi operations in the United States. [Link Here](#)
- How many Waymo, Cruise driverless cars have crashed? [Link Here](#)
- US probing Virginia fatal crash involving Tesla suspected of running automated driving system. [Link Here](#)
- Automated car company planning to launch in Dallas has self-driving permit revoked in California. [Link Here](#)
- GM's Cruise recalling 950 driverless cars after pedestrian dragged in crash. [Link here](#)
- The final 11 seconds of a fatal Tesla Autopilot crash. [Link Here](#)