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**HB 1447 - Motor Vehicles - Autonomous Vehicles - Standards,
Requirements, and Prohibited Acts
House Environment and Transportation Committee
March 7, 2024**

SUPPORT

**Donna S. Edwards
President**

Maryland State and DC AFL-CIO

Chairman and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of HB 1447. My name is Donna S. Edwards, and I am the President of the Maryland State and District of Columbia AFL-CIO. On behalf of Maryland's 300,000 union members, I offer the following comments.

HB 1447 requires that any autonomous vehicle operating in the state of Maryland has a human seated in the front seat that is capable and licensed to operate that vehicle. It also requires that the vehicle is designed to allow humans to take control of the operations of the vehicle.

Autonomous vehicles are not safe to operate on Maryland's roads without protections for pedestrians, roadworkers, drivers, and passengers. Over the last decade autonomous vehicle companies have used public roads, built with taxpayer money, as their own laboratories.

2016 was the first year that an autonomous vehicle was involved in a fatal crash. Since then media outlets routinely cover accidents and crashes involving autonomous vehicles. Self driving cars have driven through crime scenes¹, created massive traffic jams², and even run over pedestrians prompting a recall of 950 autonomous vehicles.³ The National Transportation Safety Board even noted, "Recently, some companies have started testing without a safety driver in the vehicle. Because the National Highway Transportation Safety Administration—the regulatory agency responsible for ensuring vehicle safety—has not established performance measures and testing standards for automated vehicles, individual manufacturers create their testing requirements. This creates an inconsistent level of testing on our roadways, that is not verified, and potentially hazardous."

We urge a favorable report on HB 1447.

¹ KVTU Staff. "Self-driving car blocks police responding to San Francisco shooting." Fox KVTU. June 11, 2023.

² Jordan Valinsky, "Complete meltdown": Driverless cars in San Francisco stall causing a traffic jam." CNN Business. August 14, 2023.

³ Andrew Hawkins, "Cruise is recalling 950 driverless cars after one of its vehicles ran over a pedestrian." The Verge. November 8, 2023.