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AFFILIATED WITH THE

INTERNATIONAL BROTHERHOOD OF TEAMSTERS



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March 4, 2024

Maryland House of Delegates
Environment and Transportation Committee
Room 251
House Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

Chair Korman and Members of the Committee:

The members of Teamsters Joint Council 62 urge you to stand up for public safety supporting HB 1447.

Big Tech and the corporations that invest in driverless vehicles repeatedly tell us that their technology is safe and reliable, yet they refuse to provide the public and lawmakers with the data and information on the safety of their products. We know that crashes are occurring and that deaths, injuries, and the destruction of property have been caused by failures in autonomous driving technology. In cities like San Francisco, where fully driverless vehicles have been operating, there have been numerous incidents of these vehicles colliding with firetrucks that had their lights/sirens activated, interfering with police officers at crime scenes and traffic stops, blocking sanitation workers, creating gridlock traffic, and in one case, dragging a pedestrian over 20 feet before stopping. The one similarity to nearly every above issue is that a human operator would have avoided or mitigated the damage done.

Sponsored by Delegate Lewis, HB 1447 will require that any autonomous vehicle operating in the state of Maryland must have a human seated in the front seat who is properly licensed to operate the size and class of said vehicle. The vehicle must have the equipment necessary for the person in the front seat to take control of the vehicle in case of a failure in the autonomous technology. The general public is protected from a worst-case scenario by having a human being present who is able to regain control of a vehicle, safely assess a situation, and provide aid if necessary in the event of a failure in the vehicle's autonomous driving technology.

The citizens of Maryland should not be the lab rats profit-chasing corporations who test their unproven technology on our streets. This bill creates a failsafe solution that will protect pedestrians, first responders, roadside workers, and pedestrians – we urge you to vote 'yes' on HB 1447 when it comes before the Environment and Transportation Committee.

Respectfully,

Handwritten signature of Sean Cedenio.

Sean Cedenio
President

Handwritten signature of Lawrence A. Wolfe Jr.

Lawrence A. Wolfe Jr.
Legislative Representative