



Wes Moore | Governor
Aruna Miller | Lt. Governor
Kevin A. Anderson | Secretary of Commerce
Signe Pringle | Deputy Secretary of Commerce

DATE: March 2, 2023
BILL NO: Senate Bill 685
BILL TITLE: Vehicle Laws – Autonomous Vehicle Converters – Sale of Autonomous Vehicles
COMMITTEE: Judicial Proceedings
POSITION: Support

The Maryland Department of Commerce (Commerce) supports Senate Bill 685- Vehicle Laws – Autonomous Vehicle Converters – Sale of Autonomous Vehicles.

Background:

Senate Bill 685 changes certain regulations related to the conversion and sale of commercial and industrial autonomous vehicles. This bill also adds a definition of Autonomous Vehicle Converters and Converted Autonomous Vehicles. It limits the intent of the changes in regulations to motor vehicles “intended for commercial or industrial use,” thereby not exempting consumer vehicles. Finally, it allows an Autonomous Vehicle Converter to sell, transfer, lease, offer for sale or resell a Converted Autonomous Vehicle or a motor vehicle purchased by an Autonomous Vehicle Converter with the intent to convert the motor vehicle into a Converted Autonomous Vehicle.

Rationale:

Current Maryland law is constraining to several companies in Maryland that convert existing industrial and military equipment into autonomous vehicles. Commerce has had interactions with at least one such company that has considered moving to Virginia as a result, but fortunately Virginia’s laws are equally restrictive. Senate Bill 685 will give Maryland a competitive advantage for retaining and attracting future autonomous vehicle manufacturers.

Commerce respectfully requests a favorable report on Senate Bill 685.