

Amalgamated Transit Union Local 1300

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Proudly representing the transit workers of the MTA!



HB 1295 / SB 909 - Vehicle Laws - Fully Autonomous Vehicles Unfavorable

House Appropriations Committee & Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee
March 4th & 5th, 2026

ATU Local 1300 represents over 3,000 transit workers at the Maryland Transit Administration (MTA). This includes bus operators, bus mechanics, rail operators, rail maintenance workers, and more. Our members keep Maryland moving every day.

No matter what any company tells you, autonomous vehicles are not fully autonomous. At least not yet. They still require human intervention and assistance on occasion (See Appendix 1 & 2). So bills that legalize so-called autonomous vehicles in 2026 are really bills that allow unrestricted experimentation of new, potentially dangerous technology on our roads that is still clearly working on resolving major issues. All Maryland drivers and pedestrians are thrown into this experiment with them. We are the guinea pigs.

Even cities that are further along in their launches are dealing with the consequences. San Francisco had to shut down its entire Waymo fleet during a power outage because the “autonomous vehicles” couldn’t handle navigating in traffic without the traffic lights. Simple parades leave Waymos baffled. Residents living next to Waymo parking lots are stuck listening to uncontrollable beeping noises.

So why is this bill here today? What’s the rush? It’s because for the second time in little over a decade Silicon Valley is asking for legislators to throw out the existing laws that they have in place to set commonsense regulations of an industry (e.g. requiring a human driver, or requiring companies to pay payroll taxes, etc.). Tech companies are allergic to regulation and safeguards. They ideologically view it as an impediment to their ability to “innovate.” Move fast and break things is their motto. What they actually bristle at is that safety regulations cost money. Moving slow and taking our time to get things right costs them money.

Waymo, just like Uber in 2013, would rather make some mistakes and even flex the boundaries of the law to gamble at the chance of being the big winner in this new market. Waymo has made its business model one where it loudly and publicly announces that it is “entering a new market” then turns around to use that pressure and interest to request that legislators change laws to allow them to operate. Legislators should not fall for this trick a second time.

Just learn from the example of Transportation Network Companies (TNCs). Uber got a generation of people hooked on “rideshare” platforms. We were sold a promise that people would drive for TNCs in their spare time. We were promised cheap rides. What we got was half a decade of subsidized transportation at a loss for the companies until the moment they had destroyed their Taxicab competitors and undermined public transit. Now TNC ride prices have skyrocketed. Those very same companies unveil products (e.g. Uber Shuttle) that mimic public transit.

The only thing that TNCs substantively achieved was taking hundreds of thousands of workers out of formal W-2 employment and putting them into a shadow “gig economy.” Now Waymo or Zoox will promise safer and even cheaper rides. Why should we believe them this time?

It is also worth noting that the State of Maryland’s Connected & Autonomous Vehicle Working Group clearly considers workers to be an afterthought. We do not believe that there were any worker representatives involved. Maryland’s transportation sector employs thousands of people. Is the plan to just unleash potentially mass unemployment causing technology in the sector and just let it run wild with no strategy? How is the state supposed to replace this tax revenue? How is the state supposed to find new employment for these workers? My greatest fear is that there is no plan. Just senseless “innovation” and “disruption” for the sake of disruption.

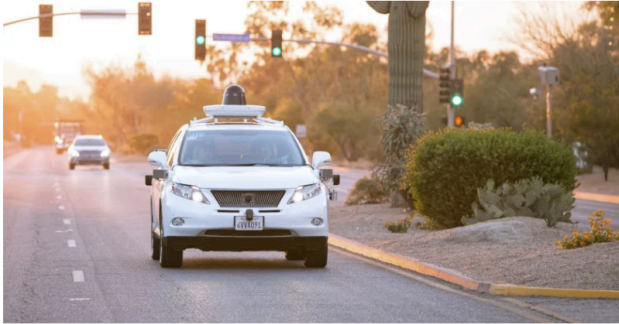
Appendix 1. Article from San Francisco Chronicle (2/9/26) and Reuters (2/17/26)

TRANSPORTATION

Waymo Says Its Robotaxis Get Help From Workers Overseas

In testimony before the U.S. Senate, a top Waymo executive revealed that the autonomous vehicle company uses remote workers in the Philippines to assist its self-driving cars.

February 09, 2026 • Aidin Vaziri, San Francisco Chronicle



Reuters

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Waymo defends use of remote assistance workers in US robotaxi operations

By David Shepardson

February 17, 2026 4:58 PM EST • Updated February 17, 2026



A Waymo driverless taxi is shown driving in Hollywood, Los Angeles, California, U.S., January 13, 2026. REUTERS/Mike Blake/FILE Photo Purchase Licensing Rights

Appendix 2. Article from Business Insider (5/16/25)

BUSINESS INSIDER

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TRANSPORTATION

Tesla's robotaxi debut will be invite-only and have a lot of teleoperators, an analyst says. Here's what that could mean.

By Lloyd Lee + Follow



Tesla's robotaxi debut will include a small fleet of Model Ys, CEO Elon Musk said. Stanislav Kogur/SOPA Images/LightRocket via Getty Images

May 16, 2025, 11:50 PM ET

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The analyst also wrote that the robotaxis will operate on public roads, that the service will be invite-only, and that there will be many teleoperators on hand.

Business Insider Driverless NEW

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"Public roads. Invite only. Plenty of tele-ops to ensure safety levels ("we can't screw up")," Jonas wrote. "Still waiting for a date."

In the context of robotaxis, teleoperators often mean that a remote employee can take some level of control of the vehicle, typically when the autonomous driver gets stuck.

Appendix 3. WKRN Coverage of Stranded Waymo Blocking Ambulance During Austin Mass Shooting



Waymo robotaxi blocks EMS responding to Austin mass shooting



Nicole Cobler



Waymo has been expanding its presence in Austin and across the U.S. In Austin, riders can call a Waymo through the Uber app. Photo: Brandon Bell/Getty Images

A Waymo robotaxi picking up a passenger near Sunday morning's [mass shooting](#) in Austin blocked an ambulance from reaching the scene, according to a bystander video. Waymo and EMS officials confirmed the video shows the company's vehicle blocking the ambulance.

Appendix 4. Houston Chronicle Coverage of Waymo Issues with Rail Crossing

LOCAL // TRANSPORTATION

Self-driving Waymo cars stack up at Fifth Ward rail crossing, blocking driveways and blaring horns

By Octavia Johnson, Staff Writer
Feb 25, 2026



Appendix 5. Articles by Futurism (12/17/25) and ABC 7 News (12/6/25)

SOCIETY

3 Waymo self-driving cars in 'standoff' cause traffic jam in San Francisco

Monday, December 8, 2025



The video shows three self-driving Waymo cars blocking a residential street after two of them appeared to have hit each other. The third seemed to have stopped when it sensed the others.

SAN FRANCISCO (KGO) -- Video captured three Waymo self-driving cars frozen in an apparent "standoff" on a residential street in San Francisco.

ADVANCED TRANSPORT | SELF-DRIVING VEHICLES

CRAZY TAXI

Waymo Paralyzed by Parade, Blocks Traffic for 45 Minutes

"All the pedestrian activity just made it shut down, though folks weren't directly in the way."

By Joe Wilkins | Published Dec 17, 2025 1:12 PM EST



enozymatsche via Instagram