



House Environment and Transportation Committee

March 5, 2026

House Bill 1295 – *Vehicle Laws – Fully Autonomous Vehicles*

POSITION: SUPPORT

The Maryland Tech Council (MTC), with over 800 members, is the State's largest association of technology companies. Our vision is to propel Maryland to be the country's number one innovation economy for life sciences and technology. MTC brings the State's life sciences and technology communities into a single, united organization that empowers members to achieve their goals through advocacy, networking, and education. On behalf of MTC, we submit this letter of **support** for House Bill 1295.

House Bill 1295 would create a legal framework in Maryland for fully autonomous vehicles (AVs), creating a pathway for motor vehicles to operate without a human driver. The bill sets standards for how these vehicles can be used on public roads and highways in Maryland and addresses necessary safety and data privacy issues.

AV technologies are a major area of research and investment nationwide. States that create predictable and forward-looking regulatory environments are best positioned to attract capital investment, high-skilled jobs, research partnerships, and pilot programs. AV providers, such as Waymo, are already safely serving customers in cities across the United States. Data from the sites where Waymo is currently operating is highly encouraging. Over 127 million rider-only miles driven through the end of September 2025 shows that, compared to benchmarks for human driving, Waymo Driver has been involved in 90% fewer serious injury or worse crashes, 82% fewer airbag deployment crashes, and 81% fewer injury-causing crashes. House Bill 1295 sends a strong signal that Maryland intends to compete in this rapidly evolving sector.

Importantly, the bill prioritizes safety. Requirements that autonomous vehicles be capable of achieving a minimal-risk condition, comply with applicable federal motor vehicle safety standards, and provide detailed first-responder interaction plans demonstrate a balanced approach that promotes innovation without compromising public welfare. The inclusion of accessibility requirements further ensures that emerging mobility solutions can benefit all Marylanders.

The bill's provisions preventing inconsistent local restrictions also provide necessary uniformity. A statewide framework is critical for companies developing and deploying autonomous technologies, as patchwork regulations would significantly hinder deployment and investment.

Maryland is home to world-class research institutions, federal laboratories, cybersecurity firms, and advanced technology companies. House Bill 1295 builds on that foundation by modernizing our transportation laws to accommodate emerging automated mobility systems.

For these reasons, we urge a favorable report on House Bill 1295.

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