



SafeRoadsMD

PLEASE SUPPORT SB 909

“Vehicle Laws –
Fully Autonomous Vehicles”

MARYLAND COALITION FOR ROADWAY SAFETY, INC. URGES MD SENATE JPR COMMITTEE SUPPORT FOR SB 909

March 2, 2026

TO:

Honorable Senator William C. Smith, Chair
Honorable Senator Jeff Waldstreicher, Vice Chair
Judicial Proceedings Committee
Maryland General Assembly
2 East Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

FROM:

John Seng, Chair
SafeRoadsMD - Maryland Coalition for Roadway Safety, Inc.
(202) 468-7682, JSeng@SafeRoadsMD.org, SafeRoadsMD.org

Subject: Asking Your Support for SB 909 “Vehicle Laws – Fully Autonomous Vehicles”

Dear Chair Smith, Vice Chair Waldstreicher and Members of the Maryland Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee:

My name is John Seng, founder and chair of SafeRoadsMD, the Maryland Coalition for Roadway Safety, Inc. We are 100 percent committed to one goal: reducing roadway deaths in Maryland to zero.

Consistent with ZeroDeathsMD and Vision Zero principles, we believe zero is not an aspiration. It is the standard and non-negotiable goal. But zero is a very low number.

More than 5,000 people have been killed on Maryland roads in the past decade. Behind each number is a family, a friend, a life permanently altered. SafeRoadsMD is not aware of any serious public or private criticism of roadway safety innovation among those families. When you have lived through preventable loss, you do not resist tools that may prevent the next tragedy. You demand them.

The single largest contributor to roadway fatalities is human behavior — speeding, impairment, distraction, aggressive driving, and failure to obey traffic laws. Maryland has spent decades and tens of millions engineering around these behaviors. We redesign intersections. We build safer crosswalks. We install signals and cameras. These efforts matter — and they save lives — but they are costly, time-intensive and constrained by limited state and municipal budgets.

We cannot reconstruct every dangerous roadway in Maryland fast enough to reach zero.

Maryland Coalition for Roadway Safety, Inc.
2127 Regina Terrace, Clarksburg, MD 20871 (202) 468-7682

Autonomous vehicle technology introduces something different. It removes — or dramatically reduces — the most volatile variable in the system: unlawful and unsafe human driving behavior.

An autonomous vehicle does not drink.
It does not text.
It does not speed to “make up time.”
It does not treat Maryland highways as a sport venue.

It moves from Point A to Point B at the legal speed, obeying signals, yielding appropriately, maintaining safe following distance.

That is not theoretical. That is observable, measurable behavior.

Autonomous vehicles are not a trade-off. They are not a substitute for infrastructure improvements. And they are not, by themselves, the solution to roadway violence.

But they may represent a significant step toward zero.

If deployed responsibly under the framework outlined in SB 909 — including minimal-risk requirements, first responder coordination, crash reporting, and insurance safeguards — autonomous vehicles will begin adding millions of safe, law-abiding driving miles to Maryland roads. Miles driven without impairment. Without distraction. Without aggression.

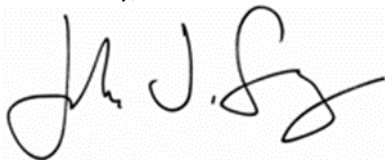
Like we have never seen before.

Much of our success will depend on public trust. The public must see — and experience — that safety comes first. Confidently assuming that autonomous systems demonstrate consistent compliance with traffic laws and measurable reductions in crash risk, they will set a powerful example of what disciplined, lawful driving looks like.

SafeRoadsMD believes SB 909 moves us forward — with urgency, but with guardrails — toward a transportation system where preventable deaths are no longer accepted as the cost of mobility.

We welcome this innovation with open arms — and with 100 percent safety in mind. We respectfully urge your favorable report for SB 909.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John J. Seng". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "J" and "S".

John J. Seng
Chair
Maryland Coalition for Roadway Safety, Inc.

cc: Rev. Dr. R. Screen, R. Weiss - Route 210 Safety Committee; SafeRoadsMD Board