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March 4, 2026

The Honorable William Smith
Chair, Judicial Proceedings Committee
2 East Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis MD 21401

Re: Favorable with Amendment- Senate Bill 909 – Vehicle Laws – Fully Autonomous Vehicles

Dear Chair Smith and Committee Members,

Howard County-based STEER Tech offers the following information for the Committee to consider favorably reporting Senate Bill 909 – Vehicle Laws - Fully Autonomous Vehicles with amendment.

STEER Tech is Maryland's first automated vehicle company to receive MVA registration and won Maryland's first AV project in partnership with MTA to use AV parking solutions for over-subscribed transit stations. The company has since evolved beyond passenger vehicles into fleet and yard management, utilizing its proprietary level 4 automated vehicle hardware and software technology to improve efficiency, safety and operations for both commercial and defense clients. STEER's deployments are engineered with cybersecurity-by-design principles aligned with international automotive security standards, ensuring that autonomy is implemented responsibly within critical infrastructure environments.

SB 909 is a pivotal step toward solidifying Maryland's position as a leader in this rapidly growing field of transportation technology. The benefits of AV technology have been well documented: improved safety, better use of infrastructure, leading to reduced traffic congestion; fuel efficiency, environmental benefits and enhanced accessibility. Promoting innovation and the widespread deployment of AVs could help ensure a safer, more sustainable future for transportation.

This bill provides a process to allow the AV tech ecosystem to flourish and grow in Maryland. By the Committee favorably considering SB 909, it will create new business and job opportunities across sectors like technology, manufacturing, infrastructure, and data analysis. As demand for skilled workers in these fields increases, the technology will stimulate ongoing economic development with broad potential across both the public and private sectors.

While STEER Tech believes that Senate Bill 909 is in line with Maryland's longstanding efforts to support critical advancements in AV technology and build public trust in technology, there has been one critical oversight: a failure to include Maryland-based AV stakeholders in the regulatory establishment process. To ensure that small businesses and industries have a seat at the table to protect competition and innovation in the state, STEER Tech respectfully requests an amendment to the legislation that would direct the establish an Automated Vehicle Regulatory Framework Committee to include individuals from industry, including both small and large companies, member(s) of the CAV Working Group, member(s) of the Maryland Tech Council, and law enforcement. Suggested amendment attached.

STEER Tech believes a well-defined regulatory approach will not only provide the necessary clarity for companies investing in this technology but will also ensure that robust safety, cybersecurity and operational standards are established to safeguard Maryland's residents. Therefore, STEER Tech respectfully requests that the Committee give a favorable report and consider an amendment to Senate Bill 909, given the positive impact this bill could have on the future of autonomous vehicles and economic development in Maryland.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully submitted,

Anuja Sonalker, President & CEO
STEER Tech, Annapolis Junction, MD

Suggested Draft Amendment

Purpose: To ensure small businesses have a voice as MDOT implements the provisions of SB 909

AN ACT concerning
Automated Vehicle Regulatory Framework Planning Committee

FOR the purpose of establishing the Automated Vehicle Regulatory Framework Planning Committee (the "Committee"), specifying the membership, duties, and duration of the Committee, requiring the inclusion of individuals from the automated vehicle industry, law enforcement, and technology sectors, and providing for the termination of the Committee.

BY adding to
Article – Transportation
Section [X-XX]
Annotated Code of Maryland

SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND, That the Automated Vehicle Regulatory Framework Planning Committee is hereby established for a two-year term to study and develop recommendations for the creation of a regulatory framework for automated vehicles in Maryland, including safety, economic impact, public awareness, and integration with existing infrastructure; the Committee shall include members from the automated vehicle industry (both large and small companies), the Connected and Automated Vehicle (CAV) Working Group, the Maryland Tech Council, local law enforcement agencies, the Maryland Department of Transportation, the Office of the Attorney General, and any other stakeholders as appointed by the Governor; the Committee shall meet quarterly and report its findings and recommendations to the Governor and General Assembly at the end of the two-year term, at which time the Committee shall terminate unless extended by the General Assembly.

SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, that this Act shall take effect on [insert effective date].