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**Oral Testimony of Çetin Meriçli, Ph.D.**  
**Chief Executive Officer,**  
**Locomotion**  
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Chairman Barve and distinguished members of the committee. Thank you for the opportunity to provide my perspective on SB 291 and the future of truck platooning in Maryland. My name is Çetin Meriçli and I'm the CEO of Locomotion.

My company is developing what we term Human-Guided Autonomy (SM) systems for truck convoying that is being tested right here in the mid-Atlantic. Locomotion is taking this 'Human-Guided Autonomy' approach to deploying fully autonomous trucks because it's safer and more economically beneficial as it scales out. Not only does our approach harness the capabilities and strengths of today's professional truck driver, it is also preparing them for the future of trucking in an increasingly autonomous world. In 2020, Locomotion received the world's first commercial autonomous truck purchase order for 1,120 trucks from Wilson Logistics.

I also want to thank the Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) and the Maryland General Assembly for their leadership in recognizing the benefits that truck platooning can offer. I had the honor of participating on a panel discussion at an event that the MDOT hosted last year on truck platooning.

SB 291 is a good bill. However, there is one adjustment that is needed to accurately reflect the current capabilities of truck platooning technology. This adjustment is critical to ensuring truck platooning in Maryland is correctly deployed in order to unlock the full benefits of the technology.

The requirement in SB 291 to have a driver in each vehicle traveling in a truck platoon fails to recognize the important use case and benefits unique to truck platooning. Autonomous truck platooning activity involves two SAE level-4 autonomy-equipped trucks working together, where the lead driver is actively engaged in driving and the follower truck is functioning in full autonomy mode.

The option to not have a truck driver in the follower vehicle could actually help relieve the strain on the nation's truck driver shortage as human-guided convoy's enable one professional truck driver to do the work of two--and generate twice the revenue. This will allow for delivering two times the freight, two times farther under current Hours of Service restrictions, and improved safety. Requiring a driver in the following vehicle, as currently envisioned in SB 291, could have a chilling effect on the deployment of autonomous truck technology in Maryland.

**SB 291**  
**Support with Amendments**  
**Çetin Meriçli, Ph.D.**

I look forward to working with the Maryland General Assembly and the MDOT to ensure human-guided convoys are deployed in Maryland in a way that is safe, effective, and accurately reflects the capabilities of the technology.

Again, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony today.