

HCS HB 1295 -- VEHICLE TECHNOLOGY EXEMPTION

SPONSOR: Davis

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "Do Pass with HCS" by the Standing Committee on Transportation by a vote of 10 to 0.

This bill defines a "platoon" as a group of individual motor vehicles traveling in a unified manner at electronically coordinated speeds at following distances that are closer than would be reasonable and prudent without such coordination.

Currently, the driver of any truck or bus traveling on a public highway must not follow within 300 feet of another such vehicle. The bill exempts the distance requirement for a nonlead vehicle in a platoon. The Highways and Transportation Commission may enact rules to implement the bill.

This bill is similar to SB 861 (2018).

PROPOSERS: Supporters say that the bill only deals with the trailing distance requirement and will still require human supervision and driving of trucks. Automated systems can brake much faster than humans and trucks automatically adjust to many driving conditions. Platooning technology will greatly reduce fuel costs and lead to more freight traffic in Missouri. Currently, 11 states allow such technology to be generally used and 33 are considering the use and testing of such technology.

Testifying for the bill were Representative Davis; Missouri Trucking Association; and Scott Marion, MoDOT.

OPPONENTS: Those who oppose the bill say that a federal and uniform law should probably regulate new technologies such as platooning. A driver with a CDL license should be present in every truck and the number of trucks in a single platoon should be limited. An insurance requirement should be imposed on the software provider as well as trucking companies.

Testifying against the bill were Ward W Cook, Mo Republican Attorneys For Civil Justice and Missouri-Kansas-Nebraska Conference of Teamsters.