



THE PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY GOVERNMENT

(301) 952-4436

Deni L. Taveras
Council Member, District 2

Senate Bill 726 / House Bill 1187

Transportation – Highway User Revenues – Revenue and Distribution

Position: SUPPORT

To: Budget and Taxation Committee
Environment and Transportation Committee

Date: March 9 and 10, 2022

From: Prince George's County

PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY, DISTRICT 2, COUNCIL MEMBER DENI TAVERAS supports SB726/HB1187. This bill fully restores the local share of highway user revenues and holds the State to its long-standing responsibility to help fund public infrastructure.

Highway user revenue restoration will supply desperately needed funding to repair and maintain local roads and bridges.

Recession-driven budget cuts decimated the local share of Highway User Revenues and have left local roadways, bridges, and other public infrastructure in dire need of maintenance and repair. Re-investing in infrastructure – a call heard at every level of government – is good for Maryland jobs, business attractiveness, residents' safety, and overall quality of life across the state.

Since 2007, more than 12 years ago, funding to local governments, to maintain and restore local roads and bridges, was drastically cut due to the Great Recession, where Prince George's County had an accumulative loss of \$381 million in funding. Our county borders Washington, DC and is home to the busiest thoroughfares that assist drivers to get to their jobs, homes, schools, vacation destinations and highways in an efficient and safe manner. Our County and surrounding counties have experienced a population growth, and the upkeep of these roads has been difficult to maintain due to lack of funding and the consistent need for repairs, leaving many roads neglected or unfixed.

The cumulative loss of local roadway investment since FY 2007 is over \$4.5 billion. With local governments maintaining 83% of the roads in Maryland, this represents a significant and critical loss for local resources.

The State created the highway user revenue formula in 1968, and for more than forty years afterward, local governments had received at least 30 percent of transportation revenues— mostly motor fuel tax and vehicle registration fees—to fund their roads and bridges. The Great Recession forced cuts to this area deeper than those in any other component of the state budget. Twenty-three counties' share of funds plummeted from nearly \$300 million in 2007 to only \$40 million in 2018: an 87 percent decimation.

In 2018, a temporary phase-in was passed to provide emergency relief for local infrastructure projects – bringing those twenty-three counties to only a third of their previous, fully funded amounts – but it is set to expire in FY 2025. If SB726/HB1187 does not pass, local infrastructure funding will again plummet, this time by about \$76.8 million, further stressing county budgets already strained by the national health pandemic, a weakened economy, aggressive education funding mandates, and other state obligations.



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Prince George's County has a cumulative loss of \$381,269,088 million in Highway User Revenues between FY 2009 and FY 2023.

The full restoration of this funding will mean better, safer, more modern infrastructure for travel, economic development, and the quality of life of Maryland's residents.

Highway user revenues fund roads and bridges across Maryland through an equitable, time-tested formula based on road mileage and vehicle registrations. This touches the roads our kids ride to school, the roads our first responders travel to keep us safe, and the roads where we all live. Without restoration of the traditional share of highway user revenues to local governments, counties and municipalities will have minimal means to address infrastructure maintenance and keep our communities safe and moving.

SB726/HB1187 returns the transportation dollars to the 83% of roads and bridges maintained by local governments in Maryland. It brings back transportation dollars to our local communities. This bill restores these desperately needed funds to their intended purpose.

Accordingly, Prince George's County respectfully urges the Committee to give SB726/HB1187 a **FAVORABLE** report to fund all local roadways.

Thank you and please feel free to reach out to me or my staff should you have any questions. I can be reached at councildistrict2@co.pg.md.us or 301-952-4436.

Sincerely,

Deni Taveras
Council Member, District 2