



DIVISION OF PUBLIC WORKS
BUILDINGS, GROUNDS & FACILITIES | HIGHWAYS | PARKS & RECREATION | TRANSIT

March 9, 2022

Delegate Kumar P. Barve, Chair
Environment and Transportation Committee
Room 251
House Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

RE: Support of HB 1187; Washington County Division of Public Works
Transportation – Highway User Revenues – Revenue and Distribution

Dear Delegate Barve:

Washington County has nearly 900 miles of paved asphalt roads and at the current funding level would only be able to overlay those roads with asphalt on a 70+ year cycle when a 20 year cycle is needed. As a result, we've had to resort to more unfavorable seals and pothole repairs rather than true life cycle preservation methods. Maryland has an ultimate goal of zero vehicle related deaths, yet at the local level financially we've been placed in a position to choose between trying to maintain what we have versus keeping up and implementing changing safety standards that save lives such as traffic barrier, bike and pedestrian crossings and pavement markings, and sight distance improvements.

In the pre-great recession era of 2009, Washington County received approximately \$9 million/year in Highway User Revenue, which then dropped to several hundred thousand and despite yearly increases, current levels are only around \$2 million. The shortfall has resulted in not only less money to repair and keep roads in a serviceable condition, but a major financial strain on the County as a whole as we try to keep up with all the important services that we must provide.

Highway User Revenues are generated from fees and taxes paid by users across the state and the division of revenue should reflect that. The overwhelming majority of all lane miles of roads are maintained at local level, yet the Counties only receive 1.5% of the revenue. By any reasonable metric that is an unacceptable level and now is the time to change it back to a more equitable percentage.

Sincerely,

Andrew Eshleman, P.E.
Director, Public Works

CC: Delegate Michael W. McKay, Delegate Brenda J. Thiam; and Delegate William J. Wivell