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**Testimony on HB 836
Transportation and Climate Alignment Act of 2024
House Appropriations Committee**

Date: March 6, 2024

Position: SUPPORT

As an architect, urban designer with specialization in transit planning and strong supporter of smart growth I support **HB 836**.

Poor land use and sprawl contribute to the fact that Transportation is Maryland's and the nation's #1 source of GHG emissions. It must be addressed or we can't meet the state's goal of reducing emissions by 60% by 2031.

The **Transportation and Climate Alignment Act of 2024** is a step towards aligning future transportation projects with Maryland's goals of reducing climate pollution.

HB 836 would require the Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) and regional transportation planning agencies to measure and mitigate any increases in climate pollution and vehicle travel (measured as VMT: "Vehicle Miles Traveled") caused by planned highway expansion projects over \$10 million. Mitigation options may include improving and expanding public transportation, creating bike and pedestrian infrastructure, expanding broadband access, or other trip avoidance strategies. This legislation supports the Maryland [Climate Pollution Reduction Plan's](#) finding that a 20% per-capita reduction in VMT by 2050 is necessary for meeting the state's climate goals.

As a member of the former MD Growth Commission's subcommittee on planning techniques and as a founding member of the 1000 Friends of MD as well as a former consultant to BMC on land use/transportation, I am keenly aware of the impact that land use has on VMT. Accounting for VMT will force smarter land use and better mode choices.

In addition to reducing climate pollution, **HB 836** would reduce health impacts, reduce congestion and be more efficient. With Maryland facing a transportation budget crisis, it's critical to prioritize spending the state's scarce dollars on projects that align with its goals to reduce climate pollution, advance equity, and expand transportation choices.

I strongly urge a **favorable report on HB 836**.