



Testimony on behalf of the Greater Bethesda Chamber of Commerce

In Opposition to

House Bill 836—Major Highway Capacity Expansion Projects—Impact Assessments and Mitigation Plans (Transportation and Climate Alignment Act of 2024)

March 6, 1014

House Appropriations Committee and Economic Matters Committee

The Greater Bethesda Chamber of Commerce (GBCC) was founded in 1926. Since then, the organization has grown to more than 570 businesses located throughout the Greater Bethesda area and beyond. On behalf of these members, we appreciate the opportunity to provide written comments on House Bill 836—Major Highway Capacity Expansion Projects—Impact Assessments and Mitigation Plans (Transportation and Climate Alignment Act of 2024).

House Bill 836 requires the Maryland Department of Transportation or a Metropolitan Planning Organization to conduct an impact assessment for a “major highway expansion project” before the project may be considered for inclusion in the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program or the Consolidated Transportation Program. While we appreciate the need to decrease greenhouse gas emissions from the transportation sector, it is important to recognize that transit, and all that comes with transit-oriented development, is not a reality in all counties in Maryland and not even in the entirety of Montgomery County. We fear this bill would discourage highway or road expansion in areas of the State where it is needed. In addition, we believe there are enough study requirements already in place that could help inform State and local decision making with regard to balancing transportation projects and climate goals.

For these reasons, we would respectfully request an unfavorable vote on House Bill 836. Thank you for the opportunity to provide written comments.

