



LEGISLATIVE POSITION: FAVORABLE

House Bill 0924 – Transportation- Regional Transportation Authorities

Written Testimony of Suburban Maryland Transportation Alliance
Prepared for the Environment and Transportation Committee

February 28th, 2024

Dear Chairman Marc Korman and Members of the Committee:

As an organization that works to advance critical transportation projects on behalf of Maryland citizens, we urge a favorable report on House Bill 0924- Transportation Regional Authorities.

We've seen firsthand how our transportation funding issues are having negative impacts on both our suburban and urban communities. From delays in replacing and improving the American Legion Bridge in Montgomery County to very real questions on how we are going to fund the much-needed Red Line in Baltimore, it's clear that we need to begin thinking about innovative solutions to move critical transportation projects forward.

One of those ideas is the bill before this committee, which provides a starting point for creating regional authorities based on proven models that have worked elsewhere in providing critical new funding sources for local and regional transit, road, bridge, bike, and pedestrian improvements.

The funding potential is significant: Based on Virginia's experience, with \$400 million a year over a 6-year capital budget cycle, a total of \$2.4 billion. Imagine if we could follow a similar path in Maryland.

Here are a few other key reasons to support this bill:

- Provides a starting point for creating regional authorities based on proven models that have worked elsewhere in providing critical new funding sources for local and regional transit.
- This is just one model. Under this bill, Maryland can choose any approach.
- The bill directs MDOT and the Comptroller to study and report on options, tapping their expertise to advance this process and support the TRAIN commission's work.

- This approach moves Maryland beyond over-reliance on the Motor Fuel Tax and other limited funding streams, to allow expanded investment that would ease commutes and create tens of thousands of new jobs for Maryland construction industry workers.

We all know Maryland is facing a current shortfall of \$3.1 billion just to keep the current pipeline of projects funded through the Transportation Trust Fund, and it is widely recognized that the current pipeline is not sufficient to meet Maryland's future transportation needs. Let's begin the process now of using innovative solutions that have a real record of working.

The Suburban Maryland Transportation Alliances urges this committee to give a favorable report to HB 924- Regional Transportation Authorities.

Best regards,

Jonathon Rowland
President, Suburban Maryland Transportation Alliance