

February 10, 2026

The Honorable Ben Barnes  
Chair, House Appropriations Committee  
120 Taylor House Office Building  
Annapolis MD 21401

***RE: Letter of Support with Amendments – House Bill 437 – Transportation – Major Highway Capacity Expansion Projects and Impact Assessments (Transportation and Climate Alignment Act of 2026)***

Dear Chair Barnes and Committee Members:

The Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) supports House Bill 437, with amendments to reflect the systems development and phased-implementation necessary to successfully achieve the project-level review and mitigation activities that are core to the bill. MDOT fully supports the intent of the Transportation and Climate Alignment Act as the Department works to more closely align Maryland’s transportation investments and climate goals. Transportation is a significant contributor to greenhouse gases in the State, and the Maryland Climate Solutions Now Act requires reductions from the transportation sector. The Moore-Miller Administration believes the State can both meet its climate commitments while growing the economy and addressing the transportation needs of its citizens. This bill can move us toward accomplishing these goals.

HB 437 requires MDOT to evaluate major highway expansion projects for their impacts on vehicle miles traveled (VMT) and greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) and to develop and implement a corresponding multimodal transportation program to offset any increases in GHGs due to corridor capacity expansion. The bill also requires MDOT to evaluate its full portfolio of major expansion projects in the Consolidated Transportation Plan (CTP) for total impacts on vehicle miles traveled (VMT) and GHGs and, to the maximum extent practicable and subject to appropriations, to fund projects and programs that offset any impacts such that the total impact of the expansion portfolio reduces GHG emissions to be in line with reductions identified as needed from the transportation sector in the State’s Carbon Pollution Reduction Plan. Finally, the bill directs MDOT to create the technical capacity and internal processes to carry out the work including updating the Maryland Statewide Transportation Model.

Since last session, MDOT has advanced a pilot effort to evaluate the CTP for its impact on VMT and GHGs, as directed by Governor Moore’s Executive Order 01.01.2024.19 on implementing the Climate Pollution Reduction Plan. This pilot effort will inform MDOT’s approach to implementing this legislation.

MDOT recommends a set of amendments that it believes will provide a workable path to full implementation of HB 437. These amendments are designed to provide the Department with a

structured, phased approach to implementation to reflect the change in long-standing planning processes that will be required. They are also designed to make clear the intermediate steps in that phased approach to reflect the Department's commitment to implementation.

- The provisions in Section 2-902 and 2-903 of the legislation should have their implementation delayed to January 1, 2029. MDOT believes that the CTP portfolio analysis should be conducted before individual project analysis, and additional time will be required to integrate this evaluation process into MDOT's project-specific workflows. There is also the consideration of the current federal landscape in the timing of implementation.
- To support the transition to project-specific analysis and mitigation, MDOT recommends two new provisions for HB 437. The first would reflect a commitment to continued efforts to advance an accurate estimate of emissions in the CTP by requiring MDOT to continue its pilot evaluation of the CTP in its next iteration. The second would require MDOT to identify annually those highway capacity expansion projects that have reached a 15% design stage to indicate whether they are subject to the project-specific evaluation under 2-903.

For these reasons, MDOT requests that the Committee provide HB 437 a favorable report with these proposed amendments.

Respectfully submitted,

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