

**HB0437 Transportation –**  
**Major Highway Capacity Expansion Projects and Impact Assessments**  
(Transportation and Climate Alignment Act of 2026)  
**Hearing Date 2/10/26**  
**Position: Favorable**

Dear Honorable Chair Barnes, Vice Chair Kaiser, and members of the Committee:

As a public health scientist and a person who values preventive approaches to maintaining health, I am shocked at how difficult it is to foster health through transportation in the built environment we live in here in Maryland.

HB0437 is essential because it strengthens public health and long-term workforce stability. Expanding sustainable transportation choices reduces air-pollution-related illness, traffic injuries, and preventable healthcare costs. Shifting investments from costly highway expansion to a balanced mix of transit, rail, sidewalks, and protected bike lanes provides more cost-effective ways to address congestion and helps the state avoid the induced traffic and long-term maintenance liabilities that accompany continual highway widening.

The bill also appropriately aims to improve transportation affordability and efficiency without increasing the state's overall transportation budget. Transportation is the second-largest household expense after housing, and low- and moderate-income families spend an outsized share of their income on transportation. By allowing the state to prioritize investments outside of highways, HB0437 helps reduce these burdens while expanding access to jobs, education, and services, particularly for residents who do not have reliable access to a vehicle.

Providing Marylanders with more opportunities to walk, ride and take public transportation will be hugely beneficial not just to our health, but to the state's overall expenditures. Thank you for your consideration of this important legislation. I respectfully urge a **favorable** report.

Michelle Carras  
Ellicott City, MD

U.S. Bureau of Transportation Statistics, Transportation Economic Trends: Transportation Spending by Income Quintile, 2024. <https://data.bts.gov/stories/s/Transportation-Economic-Trends-Transportation-Spen/ida7-k95k/>

Rocky Mountain Institute, States Can Quantify the Benefits of Climate-Friendly Transportation Options with RMI's Smarter Modes Calculator. <https://rmi.org/states-can-quantify-the-benefits-of-climate-friendly-transportation-options-with-rmis-smarter-modes-calculator/>