



Committee: House Appropriations Committee
Testimony: HB 437 - Major Highway Capacity Expansion Projects and Impact Assessments (Transportation and Climate Alignment Act of 2026)
Organization: Jewish Community Relations Council of Howard County, MD
Submitting: Laura Salganik, Chair
Position: FAVORABLE
Hearing Date: February 10, 2026

Dear Chair Barnes, Vice Chair Kaiser and Committee Members:

The Jewish Community Relations Council is submitting this testimony in support of HB 437, the Transportation and Climate Alignment Act of 2026. As Jews, we are obligated to try to fix the world (tikkun olam) and by supporting this bill to become law, we demonstrate our commitment to advancing this Jewish value.

Maryland's transportation sector continues to be the largest source of greenhouse gas emissions and one of the leading contributors to poor air quality in our state. This Act will require the Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) to fund public transit, bike and pedestrian infrastructure, transit-oriented development and solar energy on MDOT properties to offset pollution from new highway expansion projects over \$100 million.

Additionally, it would require MDOT to create accountability and transparency about projects that increase pollution and commuter costs by calculating the greenhouse gas emissions from all the major capital transportation projects in the state budget, and by investing in a greater mix of transit, walking, biking and other clean transportation projects to offset increased carbon pollution and align the budget with the state's climate goals.

Funding traffic projects with no or low emissions will offset the increase in emissions. Building sidewalks, crosswalks, bike paths, and funding public transportation projects, will help balance spending with projects that can mitigate emissions and enhance air quality. These alternative transportation projects can promote a healthier, more equitable environment and are essential to balance the climate impact of major transportation projects in Maryland.

We respectfully urge this committee to return a favorable report on HB 437.