



Unitarian Universalist Legislative Ministry of Maryland

Testimony in Support of HB 437 Major Highway Capacity Expansion Projects and Impact Assessments (Transportation and Climate Alignment Act)

TO: Chair Barnes and Members of the Appropriations Committee
FROM: Phil Webster, PhD, Lead Advocate for the Climate
Unitarian Universalist Legislative Ministry of Maryland.
DATE: February 10, 2026

The Unitarian Universalist Legislative Ministry of Maryland (UULM-MD) strongly supports **HB 437 - Major Highway Capacity Expansion Projects and Impact Assessments (Transportation and Climate Alignment Act)**. We are a faith-based advocacy organization based on Unitarian Universalist (UU) Values, including Interdependence (honoring the interdependent web of all existence) and Justice (where all feel welcome and can thrive). Working to mitigate, adapt to, and build resilience for climate change is central to our beliefs.

The **Transportation and Climate Alignment Act** aligns with both of the values by ensuring that Maryland's transportation planning aligns with the state's climate, social, health, and economic goals; and is fiscally responsible. Expanding public transportation will benefit underserved communities with quicker and more reliable access to employment, education, health care services, and shopping. Reducing vehicle miles driven will contribute to meeting the greenhouse gases mandated in the **Climate Solutions Now Act of 2022**.

The **Transportation and Climate Alignment Act** advances more affordable, safe, and clean transportation while reducing Maryland's largest source of greenhouse gas emissions—cars. Transportation accounts for roughly 35-40 percent of the state's total emissions and represents a major cost burden for Maryland families.

From a budget perspective, transportation is also one of the state's largest areas of spending. While there will be pressure to continue expanding highway construction, decades of research show that highway expansion does not solve congestion and instead drives up long-term construction and maintenance costs.

A recent analysis by RMI (formerly the Rocky Mountain Institute) found that transitioning to a robust multimodal transportation system would save Maryland approximately **\$550 million per year**, by reducing construction and maintenance costs. These savings come primarily from reduced investment in new roadway lane miles and include targeted investments in Bus Rapid Transit (BRT), protected bike lanes, and passenger rail.

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Beyond cost savings, a 20 percent reduction in per-capita vehicle miles traveled would deliver significant benefits: lower household transportation costs, reduced emissions, improved air quality, and fewer traffic fatalities.

The Transportation and Climate Alignment Act passed the House in both 2024 and 2025 with bipartisan support and previously advanced out of Budget and Tax before running out of time on the Senate floor. Moving the bill out of committee is the key step needed for full Senate consideration.

We urge a FAVORABLE report on **SB 345**.

Phil Webster, PhD

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