

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2009 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
Revised

House Bill 784

(Delegate James, *et al.*)

Environmental Matters

Budget and Taxation

Consolidated Transportation Program - Traffic Congestion

This bill requires the Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) and the Maryland Transportation Authority (MDTA) to include a section on State traffic congestion in the annual Consolidated Transportation Program (CTP). The section must include information about activities that may be implemented by other State agencies or local governments to reduce traffic congestion and travel demand and enhance mobility throughout the State and the anticipated effects of specified new capital projects on traffic congestion and mobility.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: The bill's requirements can be handled with existing budgeted resources.

Local Effect: None.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Current Law: The CTP is MDOT's six-year budget for the construction, development, and evaluation of transportation capital projects. It is revised annually to reflect updated information and changing priorities. It contains a list of current and anticipated major and minor capital projects for the fiscal year it is issued and for the next five fiscal years, including:

- an expanded description of major capital projects;
- a detailed breakdown of the costs of a project, project expenditures to date, expected expenditures for the current fiscal year, projected annual expenditures for the next five years, and total project costs; and
- MDOT's estimates of the source (*i.e.*, federal funds, special funds, *etc.*) and amount of revenues required to fund projects in CTP.

CTP also must contain reports on subjects such as bicycle and pedestrian transportation and technology spending.

Background: Since the 1950s, the rate of auto ownership nationally has steadily increased. In combination with suburban residential development, the population surrounding urban centers has become denser and traffic congestion has increased. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, Americans today spend more than 100 hours commuting to work each year; and only New Yorkers have a longer commute time than Maryland residents.

Congestion results from a variety of sources, including accidents, insufficient roadway capacity, and badly timed traffic lights. Longer commutes and traffic congestion stress the economy; lead to harmful environmental and health effects; jeopardize federal transportation aid; and accelerate transportation infrastructure degradation.

Congestion mitigation strategies typically fall into three broad categories: adding new capacity to the transportation system; increasing the efficiency of the existing system; and managing the demand-related stress on the system. These various strategies may involve a substantial budgetary investment for projects involving new highways or transit lines. But there are also less expensive solutions, such as deployment of intelligent transportation system technologies or demand reduction strategies to discourage excessive commuting.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): U.S. Census Bureau, Maryland Department of Transportation, Department of Legislative Services

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - February 27, 2009
mcp/ljm Revised - House Third Reader - March 31, 2009

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