

**Testimony by DontWiden270.org in Support of HB 299
Regarding Public-Private Partnership Projects Real Property Acquisition – Prohibition
Before the House Environment and Transportation Committee
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Chair Barve, Vice Chair Stein and members of the Environment and Transportation Committee, we at Don't Widen 270 thank you for the opportunity to share our heartfelt support for House Bill 299. We are grateful for the leadership of Delegate Love as well as the other 20 sponsors of the bill.

Over the past two years thousands of letters and emails have been written to the Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) and many legislators regarding serious concerns about the I-270/I-495 P3 plan proposed by Governor Hogan. One of the many concerns has to do with the loss of homes and property values by potentially thousands of people. We just don't know how many. At the Gaithersburg Labor Day parade in 2018, Governor Hogan promised that no homes would be taken. After he was re-elected that fall, he announced that, in fact, 34 homes and many backyards would be taken. That is a campaign promise that was broken.

Newly appointed MDOT Secretary Greg Slater recently said that with the new P3 plan that was approved by the Board of Public Works on January 8, 2020, "strips of land" would need to be taken along I-270. We don't know if these "strips" are parts of our backyards.

With these and other broken promises and uncertainties, HB 299 would at least hold Governor Hogan and the Department of Transportation (MDOT) accountable for the campaign promise made by the Governor that homes would not be taken. It would give relief to people who for two years have been living with the fear that their homes or backyards may be taken. Recently the State Highway Administration sent letters to over 3,700 residences along I-270 and I-495 informing people that the SHA would need access to their property for survey work in advance of the widening. These people live with great anxiety.

Although there are many other serious concerns about the I-270/I-495 P3 toll road project, HB299 would at least alleviate the very justified anxieties of thousands of people who could either lose their homes, or part or all of their of their backyards. Despite monetary compensation for the real estate, these losses could cost individual citizens tens or hundreds of thousands of dollars. In addition, they would force many people to relocate, creating great emotional, financial, and in some cases, physical distress. This is wrong.

We strongly urge the Committee to report HB 299 favorably.