



John Hartline, Chair

50 Harry S. Truman Parkway • Annapolis, MD 21401
Office: 410-841-5772 • Fax: 410-841-5987 • TTY: 800-735-2258
Email: rmc.mda@maryland.gov
Website: www.rural.maryland.gov
Charlotte Davis, Executive Director

Letter of Information
House Bill 351 - Land Use and Vehicle Miles Traveled Workgroup
Environment and Transportation Committee
February 12, 2020

The Rural Maryland Council submits the following **Letter of Information** for House Bill 351 - Land Use and Vehicle Miles Traveled Workgroup.

The purpose of HB 351 is to establish the Land Use and Vehicle Miles Traveled Workgroup to develop a State strategy that identifies State and local land use policies, business incentives, and transportation policies, investment and programs; to authorize the Workgroup to establish subcommittees and collaborate with expert witnesses; and to require a report with its final findings and recommendations to the Governor and General Assembly by December 31, 2021.

Rural Marylanders are reliant on motor vehicles with few mass transit options. Many live several miles from grocery stores, schools and places of worship. Rural residents experience some of the longest commutes. (<https://www.indexmundi.com/facts/united-states/quick-facts/maryland/average-commute-time#map>) A vehicle miles travelled policy could inadvertently place a larger burden on our State's rural residents. While the Council is in support of such efforts to discourage travel by automobile, the Workgroup must recognize that mobility in rural Maryland is heavily dependent on motor vehicles.

The Council supports land policies that encourage local economies with community input. Transportation access is a significant challenge in our State's rural areas. The Council respectfully suggests the addition of local representation as designated by the Maryland Association of Counties as a member of the Workgroup. Increased membership will ensure that our rural areas challenges to transportation options are considered.

The Rural Maryland Council (RMC) brings together citizens, community-based organizations, federal, state, county and municipal government officials as well as representatives of the for-profit and nonprofit sectors to collectively address the needs of Rural Maryland communities. We provide a venue for members of agriculture and natural resource-based industries, health care facilities, educational institutions, economic and community development organizations, for-profit and nonprofit corporations, and government agencies to cross traditional boundaries, share information, and address in a more holistic way the special needs and opportunities in Rural Maryland.

"A Collective Voice for Rural Maryland"