



THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES  
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

**Testimony in Support of HB351**  
**Land Use and Vehicle Miles Traveled Workgroup Act of 2020**  
Testimony by Delegate Vaughn Stewart  
February 12, 2020 • Environment and Transportation Committee

Vehicle Miles Traveled

For decades, states' transportation planning paradigm assumed "transportation" meant automobile travel, and that increased automobility was always desirable. But a new paradigm has been embraced by the Maryland Department of Transportation: The better goal for transportation planners is to increase residents' ability to reach desired goods, services, and activities, even if it means reducing the state's total number of vehicle miles traveled (VMT). Reducing VMT actually yields a variety of benefits, including alleviating traffic congestion, reducing air pollution, cutting greenhouse gas emissions, decreasing crash fatalities, and promoting public health.

What the Bill Does

**HB351 will establish a Workgroup to develop a strategy to reduce the number of vehicle miles traveled in Maryland.** The Workgroup will identify potential solutions across several areas, including public transit, pedestrian safety, and land use. It will be comprised of all relevant stakeholders, including environmental, business, labor, and housing groups, as well as both state and local officials.

Why the Committee Should Vote Favorably

This bill will benefit Marylanders' quality of life while promoting both equity and sustainability. First, it's no secret that Maryland has some of the worst traffic in the country. We must explore ways to alleviate commutes, reduce accidents, and bring people closer to their jobs. By studying both transportation alternatives and land use policies, the Workgroup will develop a strategy to reduce the daily commuting headaches of many Marylanders.

Second, transportation is the largest source of greenhouse gas emissions in Maryland. We must act boldly to prevent and mitigate the disastrous effects of climate change which is already affecting our state. The blueprint provided by this Workgroup will provide another way to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Finally, land use and transportation policies have long contributed to inequities in housing and employment opportunities, locking some Marylanders out from high opportunity areas. By focusing on housing costs, transportation costs, and proximity to jobs, this Workgroup will create a strategy to increase opportunity for working Marylanders.

For the above reasons, I urge a favorable report.