



February 10, 2020

Environment and Transportation Committee
House Office Building, Room 251
Annapolis, MD 21401

**HB 292, Toll Roads, Highways, and Bridges - County Government Consent Requirement -
Expansion (Support)**

Testimony for February 13, 2020

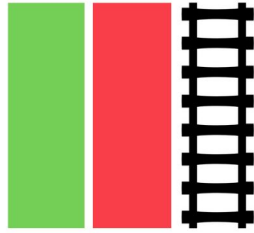
Thank you, Chair Barve, Vice Chair Stein, and Environment and Transportation Committee members. I am speaking on behalf of the Maryland Advocates for Sustainable Transportation (MAST), a coalition of 25 non-profit and community advocacy organizations committed to collaboration and coordination among local jurisdiction and the state when planning and implementing major transportation projects. We urge you to support HB 292, with amendments.

HB 292 would extend the requirement that the state receive the consent of a majority of affected Eastern Shore county governments before building a toll road, highway, or bridge in those counties. We strongly believe that this right should be expanded to include all Maryland counties affected by toll projects. We would support an amendment that clarifies the definition of "affected counties."

Throughout the process to expand I-495 and I-270, one thing has been clear: the state has not adequately listened to or worked with the local jurisdictions that would bear the brunt of construction, environmental impacts, and toll payments. Even with the Maryland Department of Transportation's (MDOT's) recent commitment to improve coordination with counties, nothing guarantees that they must do so.

Without that guarantee, we've seen that the three-person Board of Public Works has the ability to push through massive highway projects without first considering local needs and concerns. Constructing a new toll road is an enormous decision that fundamentally alters the natural landscape by destroying homes, increasing greenhouse gas pollution, disrupting natural habitats, and promoting sprawl.

Therefore, we urge you to support HB 292 and equitably extend the right of nine counties to the other 15 counties and county-equivalents. Thank you for your consideration.



MARYLAND
ADVOCATES FOR
SUSTAINABLE
TRANSPORTATION

MAST Members:

Audubon Naturalist Society
Bike Maryland
Central Maryland Transportation Alliance
Chesapeake Bay Foundation
Chesapeake Physicians for Social Responsibility
Coalition for Smarter Growth
Greater Farmland Civic Association
Greater Greater Washington
Howard County Climate Action
Interfaith Power & Light (DC.MD.NoVA)
League of Women Voters of Maryland
Maryland Legislative Coalition
National Parks Conservation Association
Sierra Club Maryland
Smart Growth Maryland
Washington Area Bicyclist Association

MAST Principles Signers:

350 Montgomery
Baltimore Transit Equity Coalition
Cedar Lane Unitarian Universalist Church Environmental Justice Ministry
Corazón Latino
Friends of Sligo Creek
Neighbors of the Northwest Branch
Northwood-Four Corners Civic Association
Rails to Trails Conservancy
Sunrise Movement Howard County