



I am Jennifer Russel, Vice-Chair of the Suburban Maryland Transportation Alliance and am here today testifying for SMTA in opposition to SB 229. Expansion of the current provision which allows Eastern shore counties to give consent for any new toll highways to **all** counties is a huge unnecessary overreach that seeks to cruelly and specifically target current efforts to implement the P3 Traffic Relief Plan. Indeed, the broadly worded language could also block the State from improving existing interstate highways-surely not a prudent or needed approach.

Among others, we speak for beleaguered Montgomery County citizens in the Upcounty region who are confronted with I-270's masquerading as a parking lot about 7 hours per day. This bill and the myriad of similar obstacle-like bills which the legislature has foolishly been considering seek to hijack the P3 Traffic Relief Plan and condemn many of the County's residents to a future of endless congestion with no hope for relief, a fact that cripples their quality of life and most certainly is responsible for the anemic economic health of the County.

The newly minted Beltway Accord is a miracle at best. Coupled with two recent positive Board of Public Works votes, it poises the State to move forward in a positive way for its constituents who are mired in the misery of traffic congestion. The new managed lanes coupled with mandated dedicated bus service can only be realized by P3 funding. There is no other money. It is unconscionable to fabricate bills such as these to stand in the way of a better future for your constituents. We urge you to vote to oppose this bill, whose negative political underpinnings only ensures delay, increases cost and offers an irresponsible solution.
