

TESTIMONY OF ROBERT WINDLEY IN OPPOSITION TO HB 292
ENVIRONMENT AND TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

FEBRUARY 13, 2020

Mr. Chairman, Mr. Vice Chairman, and Members of the Committee: I am grateful for this opportunity to come before you and testify in opposition to HB 292.

On January 8, 2020, the Board of Public Works took an historic step to finally tackle the traffic crisis by approving phase 1 of the Maryland Traffic Relief Plan. Unfortunately, this bill--a bill which would bring more government red tape to our region--seeks to shatter the progress that's been made to solve our notorious traffic congestion.

As the debate over the Traffic Relief Plan continues, I've been made aware of a number of erroneous efforts and claims that attempt to thwart the plan, of which this bill is just one. For example, I've heard opponents say that we need to get people to stop driving cars, while others say that additional lanes will ultimately produce more emissions, which is simply false. Further, opponents have mistakenly accused MDOT of not listening to the community, when the reality is that they've held countless meetings to discuss the traffic plan with residents. My favorite erroneous effort against the Traffic Relief Plan, however, was when I heard first hand from a state legislator that wondered if perhaps it's time for the voting process of the Board of Public Works to change, presumably because the Board would not agree with him on this one issue.

It seems a bit cynical to just change the process of something simply because we don't agree with the outcome, doesn't it? Yet, this bill was created for that very purpose.

Not only does this bill threaten to halt our hopes of finally relieving our region of its traffic nightmare, but it is also deeply flawed at its core. First and foremost, this bill goes against the majority of residents in the region, who favor this traffic plan. Second, this bill would cause contention between neighboring counties. Is that what we really want, counties being against one another?

I thank you again for your time, and I ask the Committee to vote against sending HB 292 to the

full House of Delegates.