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Patrick Moran - President

Testimony
HB 292 – Toll Roads, Highways, and Bridges – County Government Consent
Requirement - Expansion
Environment and Transportation
February 13, 2020
Support

AFSCME supports HB292. This legislation expands *to all counties and Baltimore City* the requirement that a State agency receive the express consent of a majority of the affected county governments before it constructs a toll road, toll highway, or toll bridge in those counties. Under present law, this requirement only applies to the nine Eastern Shore counties.

Major plans are in process to build a third crossing over the Chesapeake Bay, and an expansion - including toll lanes - on Interstate 495 and Interstate 270. However, both undertakings have come under criticism for, in the localities' view, not engaging and coordinating to a desired level given the size of the local impact these projects will have.

HB 292 provides a simplified and succinct manner to address this by allowing any of the twenty-four local governing jurisdictions of Maryland that are directly affected by the potential construction of a toll road, toll highway or toll bridge to officially weigh-in. A majority of the affected jurisdictions would have to be earned before the State agency could move forward with the project.

Localities have their own growth and development strategic plans. The ability of those plans to be formally taken into consideration through express consent by the impacted jurisdictions will ensure that a coordinated partnership can be developed and maintained by the State and the local jurisdictions. We urge the committee to provide a favorable report on HB 292.

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