



Transit Alternatives to Mid-County Highway Extended

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TAME Coalition Supports **SB229** - Requiring County Consent for Toll Projects
Toll lanes flunk the test for climate sanity, racial justice and social equity.

Good afternoon, my name is Joseph Horgan and I'm representing the TAME Coalition. TAME stands for Transit Alternatives to the Mid-County Highway Extended (also called M-83 Highway). We support Senate Bill 229, to require county consent before the state can build a toll road or other toll project. The TAME Coalition has worked for over ten years to promote transit alternatives to serve Gaithersburg, Germantown and Clarksburg, including bus rapid transit and expanded MARC service, and to oppose the proposed M-83 Highway. We support the mission of the Maryland Transit Opportunities Coalition.

Highway projects, including the proposed M83 Highway and I-270 widening, are climate-busters. The construction and operation of highways increases carbon emissions into our atmosphere, accelerating global warming. Highways destroy forests and wetlands that we need to absorb the more-intense storms associated with the climate crisis.

Highway projects including P-3s and toll roads are unjust; they damage communities along their corridors in many ways. In the MD-355 corridor that parallels I-270 in Montgomery County, the communities are on average lower-income and younger than in the County as a whole. These communities will suffer the increased airborne toxics, heat emergencies, and flood hazards brought by proposed highway projects, and are least-able to afford cars. These communities depend upon public transit service, and safe walkable streets where they live and work.

To impose highway projects upon us including toll roads without express County consent, would prevent our local officials from fulfilling their Emergency Climate and Racial Justice and Social Equity commitments to our residents. To fulfill these resolutions, Montgomery officials now apply climate and justice tests to every proposed investment including highway projects.

TAME Coalition supports SB229 wholeheartedly, and we expect that when this legislation becomes law, our Montgomery County elected and appointed officials will use this consent power to fulfill their climate and justice commitments to the people of Montgomery County. Highways including toll lanes flunk the test for climate sanity and the test for racial justice and social equity. In order to fulfill their climate and justice commitments, our elected officials must say Yes to transit and walkability, and No to new or expanded highway projects. Thank you for this opportunity to testify.

Joseph Horgan
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