

CABE_FAV_SB229

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Position: FAV

**Testimony by Citizens Against Beltway Expansion (CABE) in Support of SB 229
Regarding Toll Roads, Highways and Bridges
County Government Consent Requirement – Expansion
Before the Senate Finance Committee
January 29, 2020**

**Barbara Coufal, Co-Chair
P.O. Box 3593, Silver Spring, MD 20918**

Chair Kelley, Vice Chair Feldman, members of the Finance Committee, thank you for the opportunity for the Citizens Against Beltway Expansion to share its support for Senate Bill 229. We are grateful for the leadership of Senator Lee as well as Sens. Augustine, Beidle, Benson, Hayes and other cosponsors of the bill. This legislation is essential to ensuring public accountability and transparency when the State contemplates extraordinary toll projects, such as Governor Hogan's controversial plan to widen I-495 and I-270 with private toll lanes.

SB 229 extends to all Maryland counties an existing law that requires the State to get consent from a majority of the impacted counties on the Eastern Shore before it can proceed with new toll facilities that affect them.

Expanding the majority consent requirement would:

- Capitalize on the knowledge and experience of local elected and appointed officials who are experts in their own backyards and deal with traffic problems and land use matters in their communities every day.
- Help to ensure public accountability, transparency and buy-in when new toll facilities, especially P3 toll lanes, are considered.

The Hogan administration's actions over the last two years demonstrate why SB 229 is essential. The administration has made many claims about its Luxury Lanes proposal, but refuses to share with the public, elected officials and planning officials, the underlying data to support their claims. Treasurer Kopp and the Department of Legislative Services have rightly questioned whether this P3 project will be more financially advantageous to Maryland citizens and drivers than traditional financing. Experience from other states suggest that taxpayers could be on the hook, despite claims by the Governor that the project will not require public subsidies. In fact, just this month, the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) released a report on P3 projects. They found that, increasingly, taxpayers are subsidizing P3 toll projects as

developers seek to limit their risk. Over the past decade, the CBO found that 44 percent of private financing was repaid in direct payments from state and local governments.

Without access to the data, the Hogan administration's claims about the financing of this project cannot be evaluated. But if counties have a role in approving such projects, they can insist on the type of information that the administration now seeks to hide.

The Hogan administration has also made claims about how the Luxury Lanes will reduce congestion. But the failure to make the underlying data public suggests that their claims cannot be trusted. Under SB 229, county officials could insist on seeing the data for such projects.

The Hogan administration won't even tell the public how much the tolls will be on these Luxury Lanes. If SB 229 were enacted, county officials could insist on the sharing of information of great concern to the public.

Large highway expansion toll projects, such as the I-495 and I-270 expansions, are likely to burden affected counties with new and massive tax, housing, traffic and environmental liabilities for generations to come. Given what is at stake, local elected officials should not be shut out of such decisions.

Senator Lee's bill is a reasonable measure that would ensure that all county governments, not just those on the Eastern Shore, have a seat at the table. The bill would ensure that over-eager state agencies cannot simply ignore local priorities over land use and transportation. The bill would not cancel an approved project. It simply requires consent for future projects, to ensure that they reflect local priorities and objectives as well as state priorities and objectives.

Thank you for allowing CABE to express its support for SB 229. For the record, the Maryland Sierra Club and Coalition for Smarter Growth join CABE in submitting this statement. We urge the Committee to report SB 229 favorably.

Preservation Maryland_FAV_SB229

Uploaded by: Cowan, Elly

Position: FAV

American Chestnut Land Trust * AMP Creeks Council * Chapman Forest Foundation
Citizens for the Preservation of Middletown Valley * Clean Water Action
Climate Change Working Group of Frederick County * Coalition for Smarter Growth
Friends of Frederick County * Maryland Conservation Council * Maryland Native Plant Society
Maryland Ornithological Society * Mattawoman Watershed Society
Nanjemoy-Potomac Environmental Coalition * Potomac Conservancy * Preservation Maryland
Safe Skies Maryland * Southern Maryland Audubon Society * 350 MoCo

**SB 229 Toll Roads, Highways, and Bridges
County Government Consent Requirement – Expansion**

**Finance
January 29, 2020**

Position: SUPPORT

There is currently a prohibition on State agencies constructing a toll road, toll highway, or toll bridge without the consent of a majority of the affected counties that applies to **only Maryland's nine Eastern Shore counties**. SB 229 expands the consent requirement to include the City of Baltimore and the remaining fourteen Maryland counties.

Where and how a jurisdiction grows – and does not grow – is decided locally through a comprehensive planning process. Public involvement is a critical part of that process, with comprehensive plans reflecting the vision and goals for the community's future expressed by residents. Local elected officials adopt these plans and implement them through a variety of means including zoning.

A new State toll road, toll highway, or toll bridge has tremendous potential to undermine local control of growth and negate public input by creating development pressure outside of areas planned for growth. Notably, in Maryland a change in the community – like a new highway or bridge – is considered a legitimate, defensible reason to change zoning to allow for more intensive land uses.

Additionally, a new toll road, toll highway, or toll bridge could negatively impact local environmental, cultural, and historic resources and diminish the quality of life enjoyed by residents – all of which local comprehensive plans typically prioritize protecting. Local elected officials are best poised to determine if a State toll road, toll highway, or toll bridge is consistent with their community's vision for its future and will avoid negative impacts.

The consent requirement for State toll roads, toll highways, and toll bridges should exist for all Maryland counties and the City of Baltimore. We respectfully request your support for SB 229.

Contacts: Elly Colmers Cowan and Kimberly Golden Brandt, Preservation Maryland
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LWV_FAV_SB229

Uploaded by: Ditzler, Bee

Position: FAV



TESTIMONY TO THE SENATE FINANCE COMMITTEE

SB 229 Toll Roads, Highways, and Bridges, County Government Consent Requirement - Expansion

POSITION: Support

BY: Lois Hybl and Richard Willson – Co-Presidents

Date: January 29, 2020

The League of Women Voters of Maryland (LWVMD) supports SB 229 Toll Roads, Highways, and Bridges – Local Government Consent Requirement – Expansion, just as it supported the similar bill in 2019. LWVMD supports action that promotes an equitable fiscal structure for Maryland and relies on local government for guidance.

Every county in the state is unlike any other and good policies reflect a combination of state and local priorities. Unique features of regions and counties may be better known by localities and the state provides a clear, important structure for good decisions to be made with the support of local government.

The map of Maryland brings greater understanding to how this bill impacts the state. Currently, consent of a majority of governments in nine affected counties is required to construct tolled infrastructure in the eastern part of the state where counties make up approximately 34 percent of the land and 8.5 percent of the state population. That means 91.5 percent of people residing in the rest of the state do not have this same authority.

Interagency coordination is essential to sound policies. Agencies may be on the local, regional or state level that provide added insight to making decisions. Cooperation helps promote adequate and appropriate actions to achieve mutual goals. Each decision in regards to tolling of transportation facilities has repercussions at various levels and each level of government may have specific information about that affected outcome.

This bill is one of expansion of current law. Some counties have powers that when viewed on the basis of equity, all counties would benefit from. The bill does not mandate each county have (or not have) toll roads or bridges. It simply states that local viewpoints must be valued in the decision-making process.

LWVMD urges your vote in support of SB 229 so all 23 counties may be treated equitably in regards to tolling infrastructure.

CBF_ERIK-FISHER_FAV_SB229

Uploaded by: Fisher, Erik

Position: FAV



CHESAPEAKE BAY FOUNDATION

*Environmental Protection and Restoration
Environmental Education*

Senate Bill 229

Toll Roads, Highways, and Bridges – County Government Consent Requirement – Expansion

DATE: JANUARY 29, 2020

POSITION: SUPPORT

POSITION

The Chesapeake Bay Foundation respectfully requests a favorable report on Senate Bill 229 from the Senate Finance Committee. SB 229 builds on existing law to strengthen coordination between the State and local governments on major transportation projects and protect local efforts to improve water quality. This bill expands the requirement that a State agency receive the express consent of a majority of the affected Eastern Shore county governments before it constructs a toll road, toll highway, or toll bridge in those counties. Under the bill, this requirement is expanded to apply to all counties in the State (including Baltimore City) if they are affected by any such toll road, toll highway, or toll bridge.

COMMENTS

Highway expansion projects such as those under consideration for I-495, I-270, MD-295 and the Chesapeake Bay Bridge could have profound impacts on the health of the Chesapeake Bay and affected communities. As the State considers using a public-private partnership (P3) approach to transportation projects, robust local participation into the decision-making process is even more critical.

The existing consent provision in §4-407 of the Transportation Article provides Eastern Shore jurisdictions with critical input that helps balance state and local goals for transportation, growth management and environmental protection. In 2006, the Maryland Transportation Authority convened a task force of stakeholders to evaluate issues associated with a new Bay Bridge crossing and provide guidance for future decision-making. The Task Force concluded that since “new capacity would negatively affect communities and other resources” across the study area, “coordination between State and local governments is integral to balancing construction of new roads to support existing population and new growth...” This analysis exemplifies the impacts that may be expected from any major transportation project in Maryland.

SB 229 would extend the local consent in Maryland’s established decision-making process to every local jurisdiction. Throughout Maryland, communities are investing in practices to stop pollution, and undertaking land use planning efforts to minimize new pollution. Existing law rightly provides Eastern Shore local governments with the consent needed to protect their investments and commitments. The remainder of Maryland’s local jurisdictions should be afforded the same consideration in transportation decisions affecting their communities.

CONCLUSION

The Chesapeake Bay Foundation recommends a favorable report on SB 229 from the Finance Committee. For questions or more information, please contact Erik Fisher at 443-482-2096 or efisher@cbf.org.

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DW270_FAV_SB229

Uploaded by: Gallant, Janet

Position: FAV

Janet Gallant Testifying for DontWiden270.org in Support of SB229
January 29, 2020

DontWiden270.org is a boots-on-the-ground organization with 1,000 members. We are for fair, effective, multi-modal transportation, supported by evidence that it will actually work.

In opposing the Governor's massive P3 plan, we meet with elected officials, canvass, staff tables at MDOT workshops, engage civic associations, testify, and help generate hundreds, if not thousands, of calls and emails to legislative offices and MDOT.

And then the Governor and Peter Franchot vote 'yes' at the Board of Public Works meeting, and that's that.

The counties and your constituents need SB229 as a tool and a way to have a fighting chance. All the chips are on the Governor's and MDOT's side. We have no leverage, so they keep their data and financials hidden. They give 100 empty presentations and say they're reaching out. They OK a toll project that meets the Governor's requirements, but not the counties'.

While the opposition has had some impact, the transportation needs of Gaithersburg, Germantown, Clarksburg, and Frederick will still be ignored. The northern bottleneck will be worse. The high tolls will be out of reach for the great majority, ensuring the free lanes stay congested. The environment will be degraded, and statewide, taxpayers put at risk.

All because **two people decided for us** that it was OK to trade the well-being of cities, the State's fiscal health, and the environment – all of that – for this toll road.

The P3 project started with the Governor saying 'yes'. And all he ever had to do was get one more person to say 'yes.' If the legislature passes the county consent bill, many, many more people will have to say 'yes' before a toll road is built. SB229 will finally give all Marylanders and their county officials the leverage and the say we need.

Action Committee for Transit_FAV_SB229

Uploaded by: Goldman, Paul

Position: FAV



Montgomery County's Advocates for Better Transportation

Testimony on SB 229, Toll Roads, Highways, and Bridges County Government Consent Requirement - Expansion

Testimony to Maryland Senate Finance Committee, January 29, 2020

The Action Committee for Transit strongly supports SB 229 as a long-overdue extension to all Maryland counties of local approval over toll facilities. This authority was given to Eastern Shore counties more than 40 years ago, and it is both wise and fair to expand it statewide.

At the most basic level, the State will both be more attentive to local and regional concerns and better mitigate negative impacts if it is required to obtain approval from a majority of counties affected by the proposed toll facility.

The requirement will also help level the playing field in the choice of building/expanding toll road facilities or building/expanding transit facilities. The State has in the past required buy-in and substantial funding from counties for transit facilities such as the Purple Line – a high hurdle that jurisdictions cleared to make the project a reality. It is only fair that toll road facilities, such as those proposed for I-270, I-495, and the Baltimore-Washington Parkway, win similar county political support, even if funding is not expected from the counties. Allowing State agencies to unilaterally impose a road solution on issues of such vital importance to the county communities and development is not acceptable.

In particular the State DOT's single-minded pursuit of toll facilities on I-495 and I-270 has crowded out review of transit alternatives on the highway rights of way and on parallel facilities serving much the same markets. The transit alternatives under review as presented to the Planning Board in October 2018 were described by the Montgomery County Planning Department as "vague and ill-defined by MDOT SHA, only identifying the mode of transportation rather than how [light or heavy] rail could be incorporated into any of the alternatives." Transit improvements are important to Montgomery County along with supportive changes to increase development around MARC stations, but the State does not appear to be taking them as seriously as adding toll lanes to I-270. Requiring formal county approval – as SB 229 would do – will encourage the State to formulate serious alternatives that can win county support.

Finally, the fear that toll facilities will not be able to be built is unfounded. Toll facilities can be built if they meet both State and county objectives. SB 229 would ensure that this occurs.

Gary Hodge_FAV_SB229

Uploaded by: Hodge, Gary

Position: FAV

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SENATE BILL 229
GARY V. HODGE, PRESIDENT, REGIONAL POLICY ADVISORS

January 29, 2020
Senate Finance Committee

My name is Gary Hodge, President of Regional Policy Advisors. I'm speaking today as a former elected Charles County Commissioner and Executive Director and Chairman of the Tri-County Council for Southern Maryland. In my roles as a public official, advisor to elected officials and a citizen activist, I have been engaged in transportation planning, policy and advocacy for almost 50 years.

I support Senate Bill 229, introduced by Senator Susan Lee (16-Montgomery) with 15 co-sponsors, and by Delegate Mary Lehman (21-Prince George's) in the House with 52 co-sponsors, and request your favorable consideration.

Proponents of Senate Bill 229 are here to address some compelling concerns related to the massive toll projects being proposed by the Administration—the \$9-13 billion addition of toll lanes on I-270 and the Capital Beltway (I-495), and potentially on the Baltimore-Washington Parkway (295), as well as a new toll Bridge across the Chesapeake Bay that could cost \$4 to \$10 billion dollars, or more.

The Governor recently called the toll highway-building program “the largest P3 traffic relief project in the world.” Is that an argument for speeding up, or for taking a more thoughtful and deliberate approach, evaluating the impacts and the alternatives before plunging ahead and making irrevocable commitments with potentially serious consequences for the future of our State, our communities and our people?

This simple 31-word bill would amend an existing State law enacted more than forty years ago, in 1978, covering the nine Eastern Shore counties, Section 4-407 of the Transportation Article, and extend the same authority to all Maryland counties. It would require the State to obtain the “express consent” of a majority of the affected counties before building new toll highway or bridge projects in the State.

The bill has three goals:

First, to make sure that the State advises and consults the elected county representatives of Maryland citizens whose lives would be directly affected by proposed State toll projects;

Second, to make sure that the impacts of major new toll highways and bridges are evaluated before irrevocable decades-long State commitments and multibillion dollar investments are made, and that cost-effective alternatives—including rapid transit alternatives—are fully considered;

Before the State embarks on “the biggest P3 in the world” it deserves much more scrutiny than it has received so far.

Some impacts that need to be carefully evaluated are:

- The long-term impact of these toll projects on the State's finances, its bond rating, and the risks of default to Maryland taxpayers,

- The impact that high tolls will have on Maryland's commuters and motorists, knowing that the financial viability of the P3 scheme relies upon sustaining high levels of traffic congestion on the free lanes in order to generate revenue on the toll lanes,
- The impact that construction of toll highways and bridges, with on-ramps, exits, interchanges, road widening and support facilities will have on the residents of adjacent neighborhoods and communities, farms, natural resources and heritage areas.
- The impact of new highway construction on future growth, development and land use patterns that will shape the future of the State,
- The environmental impact of a massive new highway-building program on the State's goal of reducing mobile-source greenhouse gas emissions,
- The impact that depleting Maryland's future capacity to invest in infrastructure with greater potential to stimulate economic growth and jobs could have on the State's future economy and competitiveness, and
- The ability of a toll-financed highway-building scheme to deliver on the promise of reduced traffic congestion, and enhanced mobility, access to jobs and economic prosperity for all our citizens.

And the third important goal, to restore the tradition of consultation, collaboration, transparency and accountability between the Maryland Department of Transportation and the State's counties on transportation policy, priority-setting and project implementation. In the last four years we have seen this dynamic relationship wither to insignificance.

The Administration's massive new transportation initiatives were unveiled at press conferences without warning to the public, the affected communities or their local elected representatives. At the same time, regional priorities with proven economic hitting power and the promise to deliver faster commutes, reduced congestion, and enhanced local mobility—projects that have already been vetted, repeatedly by major State studies—have languished on the former Secretary of Transportation's desk, waiting for action.

Major questions like these are being raised all over the State by concerned citizens and elected officials—questions that still have no answers.

There is reason to hope that the State's newly appointed Secretary of Transportation, who has earned a reputation as a responsive and effective administrator, will restore Maryland's 50-year tradition of collaboration with representatives of local government on major transportation projects.

But an enduring cooperative relationship between the State and the counties should rest on a foundation in law that survives the relatively brief tenure of Secretaries and Governors. Senate Bill 229 needs to be enacted. Please give it your favorable consideration.

GARY V. HODGE

President

Regional Policy Advisors

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TAME Coalition_FAV_SB229

Uploaded by: Horgan, Joseph

Position: FAV



Transit Alternatives to Mid-County Highway Extended

www.tamecoalition.org
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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
Transit Alternatives to the Mid-County Highway Extended (TAME) Coalition
301-655-6049

Hucker_FAV_SB 229

Uploaded by: Hucker, Tom

Position: FAV



January 29, 2020

The Hon. Delores G. Kelley, Chair
Senate Finance Committee
3 East, Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Dear Madam Chair, Mr. Vice Chair, and members of the Committee:

We write to ask you to support **SB229 Toll Roads, Highways, and Bridges - County Government Consent Requirement - Expansion**.

For decades, the State has been required to win the consent of Eastern Shore counties on any proposed toll facilities through their jurisdictions. Before construction, the law requires the State to receive the consent of a majority of the affected counties' governments through which the proposed toll highway would pass. **It is only fair to extend this privilege to all counties in the State, any one of which may find their communities threatened by a proposed toll road.**

We want our mutual constituents to support new toll facilities. We support this legislation to require MDOT to formally bring our county government to the table on projects impacting roadways within our county.

A significant portion of I-270 and I-495 users are Montgomery County residents who use these highways daily to commute and run errands. If toll lanes are constructed, our communities along these highways will bear the brunt of construction activities, and they may not benefit fully from the tolled lanes. That's why we believe it is only fair to give our county government a seat at the table.

Thank you for considering our request to support **SB442**.

Sincerely,

Tom Hucker
Vice President
Montgomery County Council

Sidney Katz
President
Montgomery County Council

Marc Elrich
County Executive
Montgomery County

AFSCME_FAV_SB229

Uploaded by: Kilpatrick, Lance

Position: FAV



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Patrick Moran - President

Testimony
SB 229 – Toll Roads, Highways, and Bridges – County Government Consent
Requirement - Expansion
Finance
January 29, 2020
Support

AFSCME supports SB 229. 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.

SB 229 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 SB 229.

Every AFSCME Maryland State and University contract guarantees a right to union representation.
An employee has the right to a union representative if requested by the employee.
800.492.1996

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SarahLeshher_FAV_SB229

Uploaded by: Leshher, Sarah

Position: FAV

SB229

Sarah Leshar (private individual)

Support FAV

SB 229

I support SB 229 granting all counties the right to control toll roads through their jurisdictions because localities including mine, Montgomery County, need to take back control that has been snatched from us by the state administrators. We need much more transparency and accountability from the State Highway Administration and managers for the proposed public-private partnership I-495/I-270 expanded highway toll lane project.

And we need to consider the economic costs of human and ecosystem and climate health that are not mentioned in the fiscal note for SB229.

During the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission Nov. 20, 2019, meeting on this project, Prince George's County Planning Board chair Elizabeth Hewlett and Montgomery County vice chair Casey Anderson repeatedly pushed the state highway officials for details on tolls, other financial issues, environmental impact, and failure to include transit options, but were stonewalled.

The frustrated commissioners told the state highway officials that their concerns weren't being heard, just as they hadn't been heard in an earlier June meeting. They refused to concur with the state highway plans until they got more facts.

I too feel my concerns aren't being heard by state administrators. According to the fiscal note for SB 229, approximately \$100 million taxpayer dollars have been budgeted to continue planning for the new lanes on I-495 and I-270. Taxpayer dollars are being used to collect data and model these roads, but taxpayers, and the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission, are being told we can't have access to the details.

The details, both fiscal and environmental, are essential for understanding and critiquing why the SHA has rejected many alternatives. And for assessing the fiscal soundness of contracts.

The Maryland Board of Public Works January 8 meeting discussion and decision said the public needs to share risks to get the best contractor bid.

Amanda Allen is leaving her position as the governor's director of intergovernmental affairs to become Maryland Government Affairs manager for Transurban, the private transportation firm that is seeking to partner with the state in this giant public-private partnership.

This suggests that instead of a level bidding field, Transurban has already been given a privileged place. But we, the taxpayers who have funded the studies behind this project, are told we can't learn the details. Secrecy shrouds everything. We need transparency for democracy to flourish.

The State Highway officials told the Park and Planning commissioners that they had to keep information secret because of the bidding process.

I feel that a secret bidding and contract process, especially as rushed as this one seems to be, with one bidder seemingly favored, puts me and other taxpayers at risk of fiscal and environmental disaster.

This is the largest public-private highway partnership ever proposed. Even much smaller projects have an unhappy history of failure leaving taxpayers stuck with enormous bills when tolls fail to adequately compensate the private contractors, or other difficulties arise.

In a 2019 hearing for a predecessor to SB229, former Transportation Secretary Pete Rahm said there was no need for such a bill since NEPA, the National Environmental Policy Act, would require the SHA to engage with citizens along the road corridors.

But President Trump is seeking to drastically curtail and undercut NEPA, so it's very risky to trust that NEPA will be able to give localities any substantial control.

Most important, I feel Gov. Hogan and state highway administrators are pushing for highway expansion assuming transportation needs for the next 50 years can be predicated on patterns from the last 50. But we know that isn't going true.

Climate change, which Gov. Hogan says he accepts, has become a climate crisis. Australian bush fires have consumed an area larger than West Virginia. Antarctica is rapidly losing glaciers at a rate that will raise sea levels at least ten feet. Floods and storms are causing ever more damage. With its long ocean and bay coastlines, Maryland faces serious risks.

The Davos 2020 Economic Forum theme was "Stakeholders for a Cohesive and Sustainable World." Global elite business leaders said companies needed to engage all stakeholders, including public and private actors and the planet itself, by addressing the economic costs of climate change and ecosystem loss. Investment firm BlackRock CEO Larry Fink said "Climate change has become a defining factor in companies' long-term prospects."

But the Davos forum – and multiple international climate conferences, most recently Paris – have failed to fully embrace and implement a carbon tax, which is considered the most effective way of letting market forces find the best way to reduce carbon emissions. A carbon tax bill is being introduced in this legislative session.

If Gov. Hogan is really intent on making Maryland friendly for business he must consider the climate change costs of expanding highways. The proposed expansion of I-495 will replace trees and other carbon-absorbing plants and soil with pavement. This pavement will trap heat, further warming areas along the expanded highways. Rainfall patterns, already quite locally variable, will be affected. Flash floods will increase, polluting Rock Creek, the Anacostia, and the Chesapeake.

Gov. Hogan wants to sue Pennsylvania and the EPA for polluting the Chesapeake. Surely he should begin by addressing pollution from the expanded highways he is pushing for. His administration has claimed that congestion increases emissions – which it does – but they deliberately misinterpreted data showing that adding lanes and hence more traffic increases emissions even more.

Air, water, noise, and heat pollution will increase stress and degrade health for those like me living near the highways. Children in schools like Nix Elementary School in my neighborhood and right next to I-495 will suffer. When children – and adults suffer health effects, the county incurs additional costs in education and other services. These costs are not born by the private transportation developer, or addressed in the SB229 fiscal note, but they will be a burden on taxpayers like me in Montgomery County.

A new economics text spends a substantial space on analyzing the economic, social, and public policy issues that intersect in climate change. The authors show the difficulty of getting competing economic actors to give up business as usual and restrict climate altering carbon emissions, analogous to playing “chicken.” But unless all parties do curb their business-as-usual habits and restrict emissions, the planet and ecosystems on which all life depends will be destroyed.

The planet cannot sustain business as usual; it’s a dangerous fantasy to think we can all go on as we have without drastic alteration in our behavior. We’ve known this for decades, but in spite of repeated international climate forums, there’s been a danger lack of leadership towards resolving this.

At the Davos and many earlier forums 17-year-old Swedish climate activist Greta Thunberg begged those of us in positions of power to act responsibly towards her and future generations.

Expanding I-495 and I-270 will only induce more traffic, encourage more sprawl, degrade local and global ecosystems, make the climate crisis worse.

I urge the passage of SB229 because we need to give counties and local governments more control over highway expansion projects. Projects that may benefit Gov. Hogan’s real estate holdings, but won’t serve the rest of us.

Gov. Hogan’s administration offered a late and inadequate approach to dealing with the climate catastrophe. Counties including Montgomery and cities including Takoma Park have pushed forward with their own plans for cutting greenhouse gases. But they must have control over transportation projects like highway expansion and transit alternatives if they are to begin to address emissions from that sector.

Change is scary for me as well as everyone else. If we continue business as usual and the changes that will occur as the planet continues to overheat are scarier.

Sarah Leshner, 9728 Hedin Dr., Silver Spring, MD 20903

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LWVMD_FAV_SB229

Uploaded by: Maingi, Joan

Position: FAV



TESTIMONY TO THE SENATE FINANCE COMMITTEE

SB 229 Toll Roads, Highways, and Bridges, County Government Consent Requirement - Expansion

POSITION: Support

BY: Lois Hybl and Richard Willson – Co-Presidents

Date: February 4, 2020

The League of Women Voters of Maryland (LWVMD) supports SB 229 Toll Roads, Highways, and Bridges – Local Government Consent Requirement – Expansion, just as it supported the similar bill in 2019. LWVMD supports action that promotes an equitable fiscal structure for Maryland and relies on local government for guidance.

Every county in the state is unlike any other and good policies reflect a combination of state and local priorities. Unique features of regions and counties may be better known by localities and the state provides a clear, important structure for good decisions to be made with the support of local government.

The map of Maryland brings greater understanding to how this bill impacts the state. Currently, consent of a majority of governments in nine affected counties is required to construct tolled infrastructure in the eastern part of the state where counties make up approximately 34 percent of the land and 8.5 percent of the state population. That means 91.5 percent of people residing in the rest of the state do not have this same authority.

Interagency coordination is essential to sound policies. Agencies may be on the local, regional or state level that provide added insight to making decisions. Cooperation helps promote adequate and appropriate actions to achieve mutual goals. Each decision in regard to tolling of transportation facilities has repercussions at various levels and each level of government may have specific information about that affected outcome.

This bill is one of expansion of current law. Some counties have powers that when viewed on the basis of equity, all counties would benefit from. The bill does not mandate each county have (or not have) toll roads or bridges. It simply states that local viewpoints must be valued in the decision-making process.

LWVMD urges your vote in support of SB 229 so all 23 counties may be treated equitably in regard to tolling infrastructure.

MD Rail Assc_FAV_SB229

Uploaded by: Morehead, Harvard

Position: FAV

Statement of Rail Passengers Maryland
In Support of SB 229 and HB 292

Annapolis, MD
Jan 28, 2020

Rail Passengers Maryland, the state-wide chapter of the national Rail Passengers Association, strongly supports the passage of SB 229 and its companion bill, HB 292, which would require positive consent from a majority of the counties affected before a toll road or toll bridge could be built.

The nine counties in the Eastern Shore have long had this right enshrined in law; these bills simply expand this right state-wide.

At its base, this is a simple matter of fairness; why should the Eastern Shore counties have rights denied to the others?

The reason these bills must pass this session, however, is Gov. Hogan's and former MTA head Rahn's push to give a third party the right to build toll lanes alongside both I-270 and I-95/495, in exchange for profits from the tolls. It has recently come to light that these profits will be guaranteed by the state; i.e. they have signed on to a scheme for privatizing profit, but putting any losses on the taxpayer. Not surprisingly, as the sordid details of this scheme have come to light, its public approval in Montgomery and Prince Georges Counties have plummeted.

The initial segment on I-270, for instance, from Shady Grove Rd. to the Beltway, simply does not address current delays, which we admit are real, since, if the delays were alleviated, no one would pay the toll. In other words, it is not designed to alleviate congestion, but to monetize it for private profit. Specifically, in the second segment, if it is ever built, between Frederick and I-370 (Metro), peak tolls have recently been estimated at \$40. Each way. Every day. For comparison, a monthly MARC ticket, good for unlimited travel between Frederick and Rockville (Metro) is \$162, about the same as two days in the toll lanes. This is not a project for working people, but those on expense accounts and the rich.

Our preferred solution (and it is a solution, not a short-term gimmick) for I-270 congestion is to build a third track on the CSX line, to accommodate all-day, bidirectional, hourly MARC service, with expanded service during rush hours. Each train can easily carry as many as 500 people, removing the equivalent of 1-2 lanes of cars from the road. Besides being much cheaper, and having a vastly smaller physical footprint, diesel-electric trains emit 40-60% less CO₂, and can be fully electrified to reduce this further. As demand increases, as it has repeatedly been shown elsewhere that it will, service can be readily, and rapidly, added, with no requirement for significant additional construction.

But stopping the misguided, ill-conceived, and utterly wasteful toll-lane non-solution to the area's traffic woes can only be achieved by passage of SB 229 and HB 292.

LATE_DoTheMostGood_FAV_SB229

Uploaded by: Noveau, Barbara

Position: FAV

BARBARA NOVEAU, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR,
DO THE MOST GOOD—MONTGOMERY COUNTY

BILL NO: SB0229

DATE: January 27, 2020

BILL TITLE: Toll Roads, Highways, and Bridges - County Government Consent Requirement - Expansion

COMMITTEE: Senate Finance Committee

POSITION: *SUPPORT*

BILL CONTACT: Senator Susan Lee.

To: The Honorable Delores Kelly, Chair, Finance Committee, and Committee Members

I am the executive director of DoTheMostGood—Montgomery Country, a progressive organization with more than 1700 members who live in a wide range of communities from Bethesda near the DC line north to Germantown and from Potomac east to Silver Spring -- communities that will all be affected by the massive public-private-partnership (P3) project proposed by the Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) to add 72 miles of privatized, for-profit toll lanes to I-270 north to Frederick and to I-495 from the American Legion Bridge all the way to the Wilson Bridge.

The top-down exclusionary process MDOT has used to move forward with the P3 project over the past two years underscores the need for SB0229. MDOT has ignored local input and stonewalled requests for data from residents, Montgomery, Prince Georges and Frederick county governments and planning boards, and the National Capital Park and Planning Commission.

Enactment of SB0229 will require MDOT to seek input from counties affected by proposed toll road projects from the beginning, rather than as an afterthought, and will improve the results for the state. SB0229 will help ensure public accountability and transparency when new toll facilities, especially inherently profit-focused P3 projects, are considered. It will also ensure that MDOT appropriately incorporates the expertise of local county governments about traffic problems and land use in making decisions about major highway projects.

SB0229 is a common-sense and fair measure that will not set any new precedents in Maryland. In contrast, it will ensure that the state applies a uniform process for all toll road projects and will provide all Maryland counties with the same opportunity that nine counties on the Maryland Eastern shore have had for decades. SB0229 will not cancel any project. It will simply require consent of those most affected by proposed toll road projects to ensure the projects reflect county, as well as state, priorities and objectives. SB0229 will help ensure that state agencies cannot simply ignore local policies and priorities concerning land use and transportation.

Therefore, DoTheMostGood recommends a **FAVORABLE** report on SB0229.

Barbara Noveau
15017 Emory Lane
Rockville, Maryland 20853
Barbara@dothemostgoodmoco.org

CityofRockville_MarkPierzchala_FAV_SB229

Uploaded by: Pierzchala, Mark

Position: FAV



Mayor and Council of Rockville
SB 229 - Toll Roads, Highways, and Bridges - County Government Consent
Requirement - Expansion
Senate Finance Committee - January 29, 2020
SUPPORT

Good afternoon, Senator Kelley and members of the Committee. I'm Mark Pierzchala, and I serve as a Rockville Councilmember. The Rockville Mayor and Council strongly support SB 229 – Toll Roads, Highways, and Bridges – County Government Consent Requirement - Expansion, and thank Senator Lee for her leadership. The opportunity to approve or disapprove a toll road, highway, or toll bridge is already given to 9 Eastern Shore Counties. SB 229 will expand the scope of this authority to the entire State. Rockville sees this legislation as a way to give all Maryland counties, and their municipalities, greater say in how this kind of infrastructure is designed and constructed.

Rockville will be the most impacted municipality of the current plans to widen I-270. The project will abut 9 neighborhoods and traverse the heart of our great city. Two Rockville bridges over I-270, that have no current access to I-270, will be used to provide ramps to the toll lanes. This will increase traffic in Rockville and disrupt existing traffic patterns. Rockville will have to deal with the financial impact of mitigating the impacts and residents with the greater congestion, noise, and pollution.

We are very concerned that our views have not been properly taken into account. Rockville should have been included as a participating or cooperating agency, given that it straddles I-270.

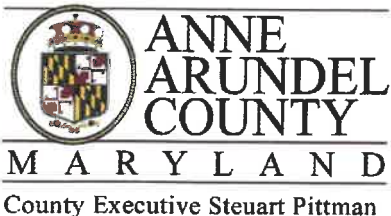
It is imperative that our views be taken seriously and included in the decision-making, as the City of Rockville owns 2 of the 4 bridges spanning I-270 in Rockville – Wootton Parkway and Gude Drive. Pedestrians, bicyclists, and automobile traffic from east and west flow over these bridges making their way across the City. The several-year reconstruction of these bridges will cripple the traffic on our already congested roadways, in addition to permanent impacts. We strongly reiterate our request for MDOT SHA to study the impact of the additional lanes and the closing and reconstruction of the bridges, with Rockville as a partner. SB 229 will give Rockville and Montgomery County a more formal role in the planning, a role that has been lacking so far.

For almost 40 years, nine Maryland counties have had a voice when it comes to the construction of toll roads, highways, or toll bridges in their communities. The City of Rockville simply asks for parity for the rest of Maryland. SB 229 will provide local governments with an essential tool to protect our communities and partner with the State to move critical projects forward. We respectfully and strongly urge the Committee to quickly provide SB 229 with a favorable report.

Anne Arundel County Executive_FAV_SB229

Uploaded by: Pittman, Steuart

Position: FAV



January 29, 2020

Senate Bill 229

**Toll Roads, Highways, and Bridges – County Government Consent Requirement –
Expansion**

Committee: Finance

Position: FAVORABLE

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comment on Senate Bill 229. This important legislation expands the list of counties to include Anne Arundel County that would have a say in the constructing of a State toll road, toll highway, or toll bridge that affects our County. Under current law 9 eastern shore counties have a voice in these decisions, Anne Arundel has as much interest as those counties and should have a seat at the table.

For example, the state has narrowed down construction options for a new bridge over the Chesapeake Bay, and all three proposed locations are in Anne Arundel County. The construction of a new bridge in these areas would have a major impact on the communities surrounding the area, increase traffic in these neighborhoods, and destroy natural areas. Therefore the County should be on equal footing with the eastern shore and have a voice for comments or concerns on the project along with the other affected counties.

A new State toll road, toll highway, or toll bridge has tremendous potential to undermine local control of growth and negate public input by creating development pressures outside of areas planned for growth. It could also negatively impact local environmental, cultural, and historic resources and diminish the quality of life enjoyed by residents – all of which local comprehensive plans typically prioritize protecting. Local officials are best poised to determine if a State toll road, toll highway, or toll bridge is consistent with their community's vision for its future and will avoid negative impacts.

For those reasons, we urge a FAVORABLE report on SB 229.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Stuart Pittman", written in a cursive style.

Steuart Pittman
County Executive

LATE_GreaterFarmlandCivicAssoc_FAV_SB229

Uploaded by: Rich, Ed

Position: FAV

STATEMENT OF GREATER FARMLAND CIVIC ASSOCIATION
SENATE BILL 229
TOLL ROADS, HIGHWAYS AND BRIDGES
COUNTY GOVERNMENT CONSENT REQUIREMENT EXPANSION
JANUARY 29, 2020

I am Ed Rich, the President of the Greater Farmland Civic Association, which represents over 3,000 residents in the Old Farm, Tilden Woods, Hickory Woods, and Walnut Woods neighborhoods that directly abut the 12 existing lanes of I-270 as well as the 850 elementary school students who spend their days in the neighborhood at Farmland Elementary School.

We have seen I-270 go from four lanes to twelve lanes in our area, which has resulted in gridlock on 12 lanes instead of the original four. Now, the Governor is pushing a multi billion dollar project for up to an additional four lanes of traffic, including two toll lanes, with no significant community input or buy-in, no consideration of the environmental impact, including our quality of life, no real study of whether the proposed project will reduce congestion and no proposal to study transportation alternatives or changes in the way development is encouraged in order to reduce congestion. It's a 1950's answer to a 21st century problem. It's being rammed down our throats whether we like it or not and whether we have better ideas on how to address the problem. It's like the elixir offered by the traveling salesman to cure whatever ails you, without any evidence that it cures anything. Well, before we buy the elixir being offered here, we need to see that it will, in fact, cure the ailment we are being told it will cure.

For that reason, we strongly support **Senate Bill 229, Toll Roads, Highways, and Bridges—County Government Consent Requirement—Expansion**. Currently, there is a prohibition on State agencies constructing toll roads, toll highways, or a toll bridge within the nine Eastern Shore counties without the consent of “a majority of the affected counties.” We see no reason why Montgomery and Prince George’s Counties should not be extended the same rights as our neighbors to the east. All counties deserve the ability to secure the well-being of their residents by protecting their interests and quality of life in the case of toll lane or highway construction.

The proposed P3 project on I-270 and I-495 assumes that the addition of lanes, including toll lanes, is the one and only solution to traffic congestion. The project approved by the Board of Public Works sets aside 10% of toll revenue for some future amorphous transit related needs. Without any indication of how many people would actually pony up for the demand based pricing of toll lanes, there is no indication of what, if any, revenue would be generated for transit projects. This is simply a feel good alternative offered to make the project seem more palatable. There is a real need for a holistic approach to the issue and a comprehensive study of what would actually work to reduce traffic congestion. To date, that has not happened. SB 229 gives county residents the voice they demand in ensuring that traffic solutions are real, that our environment is not further harmed, that climate change is acknowledged and mitigated and that our tax dollars are wisely allocated.

We thank you for your consideration and urge you to do right by the people of our community and the many other communities along I-270 and I-495.

Ben Ross MTOC_FAV_SB229

Uploaded by: Ross, Ben

Position: FAV



Testimony in Support of SB229 County Consent for Toll Roads and Bridges

Presented by Benjamin Ross, Chair

January 29, 2020

The Hogan Administration is moving as fast as it can to commit the state to a vast investment in toll facilities. Current Maryland law enables the Dept. of Transportation to build toll roads through a public-private partnership (P3) with almost no outside checks beyond approval by the Board of Public Works. SB 229 will require consent of a majority of the counties where the project is built, a rule already in place on the Eastern Shore.

This local input will ensure that multi-billion dollar contracts are signed with full transparency and will help us move toward a balanced transportation system that works for those who choose to drive and for those who choose not to. Our statewide coalition of transit riders, transit workers and transit advocates strongly endorses this bill.

Proposed new toll roads and bridges will cost Marylanders between \$15 billion and \$21 billion, according to MDOT's own estimates, and the true cost will undoubtedly be even higher. Their cost estimate for toll lanes on I-270 and the Washington Beltway, and the Baltimore-Washington Parkway has jumped from \$7 billion three years ago to as much as \$11 billion now. And previous, more detailed, state studies of parts of the P3 plan point to costs far higher than \$11 billion. On top of that is a third Bay Bridge that will cost between \$4 billion and \$10 billion.

Public investments of such great magnitude demand prudence, impartiality and transparency. What we have seen is a process sadly lacking in those attributes.

The state P3 law requires review by the General Assembly's budget committees of a "Pre-Solicitation Report" (PSR) setting forth the procurement process. Only after that review is complete does the Board of Public Works vote on the PSR. But legislative review of the toll lane P3 has been bypassed by amendments that were approved by the

BPW without any review by the budget committees. These amendments greatly increase the financial risk to state taxpayers.

Three months after the legislative review of the PSR concluded last January, MDOT sent the BPW a “PSR Supplement” containing “Key Terms of the proposed P3 Agreement” One of these terms states that if the contract is canceled due to non-performance by the contractor, MDOT “will pay partial compensation to the [contractor]’s lenders.” This was directly contrary to the Governor’s previous assurances that the contractor will bear the entire risk of project failure. This amendment was approved as part of the 2-to-1 BPW vote in June.

Just three weeks ago today, on January 8, another 2-to-1 BPW vote amended what was approved in June. Buried in the fine print was a further change in the procurement process. Based on secret discussions to be held with the bidders, the state will modify the contract terms in the Request For Proposals to provide for “sharing of risks... to provide an offeror confidence that their solution may be implemented...” This vague language authorizes MDOT to lay almost any risk on the shoulders of Maryland taxpayers – a loophole big enough to drive a truck through.

The BPW also voted on January 8 that the first P3 contract “will include the Bi-state Capital Beltway Accord partnership for the American Legion Bridge.” The text of this Accord has not been made public. But Virginia has a signed agreement giving Transurban, the Australian company that runs its existing P3 express toll lanes, the contract for its share of the partnership. What does the Accord require Maryland to do for Virginia and for Transurban?

Just 8 weeks after the Accord between the two state governments was announced, Governor Hogan’s Director of Intergovernmental Affairs resigned to take a job with Transurban. Transurban also donated \$25,000 to the governor’s inaugural committee and has spent heavily on Maryland lobbyists – \$162,000 in just the most recent 6-month interval.

How will we have real competition in these circumstances? Potential bidders, fearing that Transurban has the contract locked up, will not invest the resources needed for a competitive bid. Transurban, as the only serious bidder, will be able to set the terms of any contract. The BPW members who approved this procurement process will be compelled to accept the terms dictated by Transurban, or suffer the political fallout of killing a project that they made the heart of the state’s transportation program.

No cure for these ills is possible without a new approach based on openness and collaborative decision-making. That is what SB 229 will provide.

Just as important as the effect of new toll roads on state finances is their effect on the finances of Maryland drivers. Here again, there has been a deeply troubling lack of transparency. MDOT knows how high the tolls must be for Transurban to make a profit – it has a computer model that, according to the deputy project manager, “spits out the toll numbers.” But it has not shared these numbers with the legislature or the public.

We can get a hint of the truth by looking to Virginia. Transurban charges an average of \$1.50 to \$1.80 per mile at the peak of rush hour. On some days last month, it cost as much as \$74 to drive from Washington to Stafford. And those high tolls are headed even higher. Transurban’s CEO told his Australian investors last year that “We’re trying to maximize the tolls.” Maryland toll lanes truly will be Lexus Lanes that serve the rich.

Few Maryland commuters can afford to pay such high tolls, so heavy losses are likely. The Virginia toll lanes are losing money even with their current high tolls.¹

The finances of the toll lanes on I-95 north of Baltimore – a facility that MDOT hails as “immensely successful” – are already a drain on state resources. The toll revenue is \$14 million per year for a project that cost \$1.1 billion to build – barely 1%, when the Maryland Transportation Authority pays over 3% interest to borrow the money it uses to build. The northern extension, now under construction, is even more of a fiscal black hole – the MdTA’s own consultants estimate annual revenue of \$8.4 million for a construction cost of another \$1.1 billion. The Dept. of Legislative Services said that the extension is “unaffordable.”²

Equally troublesome is the financing of the new Bay Bridge. Except on summer weekends, few will use the new bridge if it’s more expensive than the old ones. So tolls will need to go up on all three spans – but MdTA has not told us how high. Higher tolls will hurt the year-round economy of the Eastern Shore. Moreover, it is hard to see how the MdTA can find borrowing power within its \$3 billion limit to finance a new \$5 billion or \$10 billion bridge.

So many troubling questions need answers. SB 229 gives counties the power to demand those answers and to respond effectively if the answers are not good. In so doing, it restores the system of consultation and collaboration that served the state well for 40 years but has eroded since 2014. We urge you to report SB 229 favorably.

¹Jeremy Mohler, “A poor plan for public-private partnership toll roads in Maryland,” *Washington Post*, October 14, 2018.

²Analysis of the FY 2020 Maryland Executive Budget, 2019.

John Tiernan_FAV_SB229

Uploaded by: Tiernan, John

Position: FAV

Testimony on behalf of the Carderock Springs Citizens Association and Riverhill Homeowners Association

January 29, 2020 Senate Finance Committee hearing regarding expanding to all counties in the State a prohibition on State agencies constructing within the nine Eastern Shore counties a toll road, toll highway, or toll bridge without the consent of a majority of the affected counties

My name is John Tiernan and I live at 7916 Quarry Ridge Way. I am here today as a County resident, and a representative of Riverhill and Carderock Springs communities.

Carderock Springs Citizens Association and Riverhill Homeowners Association strongly support SB0229. Our Associations have spent countless hours working to protect our neighborhoods from the significant air and noise pollution caused by the I-495 Beltway traffic. Our neighborhoods are located directly adjacent to the Beltway, between the River Road and Clara Barton Parkway exits. We are greatly concerned about air pollution from increased Beltway traffic on children's lung development and the impact of highway noise on the general health and quality of life of the residents of our communities. We are experiencing these impacts today, and things will only get worse if the Beltway is expanded. MDOT is currently considering Beltway expansion alternatives that pose many of these risks, as well as risks to the environment, our homes and schools. Given what is at stake, both our communities stand strongly behind bill SB0229, which will allow all counties (not only those on the Eastern Shore) to oversee planning of any toll lane projects.

Our previous meetings with Montgomery County representatives confirm that the County has a deep knowledge on how to effectively decrease traffic congestion and increase trip reliability while minimizing the negative environmental, health, and safety, impacts in our communities. The County is able to identify more comprehensive approaches that focus on reducing congestion of arterial roads as well.

Our Associations have raised our concerns to State Highway Administration (SHA) throughout the I-495 & I-270 comment period and did not see any indication that our feedback was considered or reflected in the alternatives selected by SHA for moving forward.

Our support for this legislation is also rooted in past failures of the SHA to honor its commitments to mitigate noise and air pollution during the last changes to the Beltway. A noise barrier wall was promised by SHA to Carderock Springs community but never delivered.

We strongly believe that counties have much more detailed information on local transportation conditions, and therefore should have a seat at the table for decisions of such great magnitude, such as a multi-billion-dollar beltway expansion.

Thank you for bringing such important bill to the Maryland General Assembly. We urge everyone to vote "Yes" on SB0229.

John Tiernan, President , Riverhill Homeowners Association

John R. Orrick, Jr., President, Carderock Springs Citizens Association, P.O. Box 237, Cabin John, MD

PrinceGeorges_FAV_SB229

Uploaded by: Turner, Todd

Position: FAV



THE PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY GOVERNMENT

(301) 952-3700
County Council

POSITION STATEMENT

SB 229
(Senator Lee)
Finance Committee

Toll Roads, Highways, and Bridges - County
Government Consent Requirement – Expansion

POSITION:

SUPPORT

SB229 – Toll Roads, Highways, and Bridges - County Government Consent Requirement – Expansion- FOR the purpose of expanding to all counties in the State a prohibition on State agencies constructing a toll road, toll highway, or toll bridge without the consent of the affected county (or Baltimore City).

Since 1971, MDTA has been responsible for constructing, managing, operating, and improving the State's toll facilities and for financing new revenue-producing transportation projects. MDTA has the authority to set tolls on transportation facilities projects under its supervision. There are currently two transportation projects in the planning stage that involve tolls: the third span across the Chesapeake Bay Bridge and the Governor's Traffic Relief Plan.

This legislation seeks to address an issue that has been raised across the state, and over the course of many years, by providing local government officials the authority to consent on transportation matters that impact their communities. Currently only 9 of Maryland's 24 jurisdictions are afforded this opportunity. Expanding the right of consent to the governments of all affected counties is long overdue.

The Prince George's County Council takes seriously its responsibility to attain the transportation goals of our constituents. As we travel our roads daily, we have firsthand knowledge of our transportation needs. Each year the Council develops the County's transportation priorities and provides that information to the Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT). All too often, we find projects supported and funded by MDOT that were not among our priorities. The authority for local governments to weigh in on State transportation projects in their communities will help ensure the proper balance for creating the framework needed for transportation priorities and investments, while delivering the best system for the traveling public.

For the foregoing reasons, the Prince George's County Council **SUPPORTS SB 229** and respectfully requests your favorable consideration of this legislation.

Prepared by: LA PEREZ CONSULTING
On behalf of Prince George's County Council

ATU_FAV_SB229

Uploaded by: Wivell, Brian

Position: FAV



Statement of the Amalgamated Transit Union (ATU) Local 689 on SB 229
Toll Roads, Highways, and Bridges - County Government Consent Requirement - Expansion
Senate Finance Committee
January 28th, 2020

At the Amalgamated Transit Union Local 689 we represent over 13,000 workers and retirees performing many skilled transportation crafts for the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA), MetroAccess, DASH, and the DC Streetcar.

We encourage all Senators to support this commonsense piece of legislation. In order to build a truly integrated regional transportation network, we need to encourage broad consensus around transportation infrastructure projects. This seems like it is only possible if the approval processes require buy-in from county governments. We believe that this bill is a simple way to encourage this approach.

Extending this approach from the Eastern Shore counties to the rest of the state also seems like a natural expansion of this already tested policy.

GreaterBethesdaChamber_UNF_SB229

Uploaded by: Italiano, Ginanne

Position: UNF



THE GREATER BETHESDA
CHAMBER of COMMERCE

Smart Business, Bright Future

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**STATEMENT BY
THE GREATER BETHESDA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
REGARDING
SB229 - TOLL ROADS, HIGHWAYS, AND BRIDGES - COUNTY GOVERNMENT CONSENT
REQUIREMENT - EXPANSION
SENATE FINANCE COMMITTEE
JANUARY 29, 2020
POSITION: UNFAVORABLE REPORT**

On behalf of our 550-member businesses and more than 45,000 employees in Montgomery County, this statement is in **Opposition of SB229 - Toll Roads, Highways, and Bridges - County Government Consent Requirement - Expansion**. We feel this legislation is misguided for many reasons.

This bill would cause further delay of State and federal investments that are urgently needed to provide real traffic relief for Montgomery residents and businesses. Giving one or more Counties unilateral veto power over the State and federal agencies responsible for planning and maintaining our Interstate Highway system is nonsensical and has as its intent to delay improvements most of the public supports and a loud minority opposes. These are improvements that have already been found to be effective, are in our region's approved long-range plans, will happen at some point because they are needed and there is no viable alternative.

I-495 is already severely congested for an average of 10 hours a day, giving us some of the worst traffic congestion in the nation. I-270 is a parking lot for an average of 7 hours a day. Studies show this congestion will get much worse without the Traffic Relief Plan (TRP) this bill is intended to block. This is not a sustainable approach, from a transportation, fiscal, economic or environmental standpoint, because congestion hurts us on all these levels. The real impact of delaying the I-495 and I-270 improvements is to condemn all of us to many more years suffering with the nation's worst congestion.

While proponents may claim this bill is like legislation in place on the Eastern Shore, that is not exactly accurate. The key difference is that the Eastern Shore law was approved to block a NEW toll highway the State was proposing at the time, while the language in this bill is broad enough to effectively block the State from carrying out its responsibilities for improving two EXISTING INTERSTATE HIGHWAYS THAT ARE ALREADY BUILT. This is an important distinction.

Neither the affected Counties, or any of the advocacy groups promoting this legislation have ever come up with ANY realistic alternative plan that would reduce the severe traffic congestion we're facing on I-495 and I-270 that do not involve adding new managed lanes. It is the only approach that offers a built-in financing mechanism using a P3 structure so it could be funded and built right now.

Now is **not** the time to go back to square one with a change of this magnitude to the approval process, after years of effort and investment have already been made at the state and federal level and by private sector firms interested in the P3 program. A full Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) is due on this in the Spring and it will contain much more detailed information on all the alternatives this study (and many previous studies) have examined. The economic effects of this legislation are significant and extremely costly.

Instead, we respectfully urge legislators to get behind the P3 Program to add new managed lanes, and new express-bus transit, especially now that major compromises have reached with several of the local counties. The P3 Program is now focusing on the American Legion Bridge and all of I-270 first, and that is the only phase approved

yet by the Board of Public Works (BPW), exactly as called for in Montgomery County and Frederick Counties' recent priorities letters to MDOT.

We believe this bill is a recipe for continued gridlock (literally and figuratively), costing hundreds of millions a year in delay-related costs, and adding yet more steps to an already cumbersome and decades-long study and review process. The TRP will bring lasting traffic relief, better transit, and tens of thousands of good jobs to our region.

For these reasons, we request an **unfavorable report on Senate Bill 229**. Thank you for your consideration of our remarks.

JKane_UNF_SB229

Uploaded by: Kane, John

Position: UNF



Testimony of John Kane
Before the
Senate Finance Committee
January 29, 2020

RE: Bill SB 229 -- OPPOSE

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. We feel this legislation is misguided for the following reasons:

First, this bill would cause further delay of State and federal investments that are urgently needed to provide real traffic relief for Montgomery, Frederick and Prince George's County residents and businesses. Giving one or more Counties unilateral veto power over the State and federal agencies responsible for planning and maintaining our Interstate Highway system makes no sense on many levels (and is probably not legal), but its intent is clearly to delay improvements a majority of the public supports and a loud minority opposes. These are improvements that have already been found to be effective, are in our region's approved long-range plans, and are going to happen at some point anyway because they are needed and there is no viable alternative.

I-495 is already severely congested for an average of 10 hours a day, giving us some of the worst traffic congestion in the nation. Sections of the Beltway in Prince George's County even experience severe stop-and-go traffic conditions on weekends. I-270 is a parking lot for an average of 7 hours a day. Studies show this congestion will get much worse without the Traffic Relief Plan (TRP) this bill is intended to block. This is not a sustainable approach, from a transportation, fiscal, economic or environmental standpoint, because congestion hurts us on all of these levels. Studies show MDOT's proposed improvements would dramatically improve the situation, and that none of the so-called "transit" alternatives some have vaguely referenced have ever been shown to actually reduce congestion on the Beltway or I-270, not even by a little. So the real impact of delaying the I-495 and I-270 improvements is to condemn all of us to many more years more suffering with the nation's worst congestion, and it will significantly drive up the construction costs for the only real solution that has ever been found to work.

We should have learned this lesson with the ICC, where two decades of delay cost us billions of state tax dollars, and in the end, there was no viable alternative but to build it. Every study showed the ICC was needed, and it could have been built in the 1990s for less than \$500 million (paid for with 90% federal highway funds, a 10% state match, and no tolls). Instead, we spent nearly \$3 billion to do essentially the same thing, and it ended up working just as projected (but for a lot more money). The ICC is now heavily utilized during both peak periods, has diverted tens of thousands of cars a day off our local road network, and has cut average peak-hour commute times by 50%, just as advertised. Studies show the TRP will be even more effective on the Beltway and I-270. So let's learn from our past mistakes instead of repeating them, avoid years of unnecessary delays, and give us the traffic relief we need now. Time after time, we seem to ignore the biggest lesson we should have learned, which is this: **Delay is the single least effective, and most expensive, transportation policy of all. Period.**

Second, while proponents may claim this bill is similar to legislation in place on the Eastern Shore, that is not exactly accurate: The key difference is that the Eastern Shore law was approved to block a NEW toll highway the State was proposing at the time, while the language in this bill is broad enough to effectively block the State from carrying out its responsibilities for improving two EXISTING INTERSTATE HIGHWAYS THAT ARE ALREADY BUILT. This is an important distinction and it is doubtful this kind of broad legislation limiting State authority would be upheld in court.

Third, none of the affected Counties, nor any of the advocacy groups promoting this legislation, have ever come up with ANY realistic alternative plan that would even slightly reduce the severe traffic congestion we're facing on I-495 and I-270 that do not involve adding new managed lanes. Nor have the put forward any way to pay for improvements without new managed lanes as a revenue source. Literally the only thing in almost three decades of prior studies that ever has been shown to reduce congestion dramatically on these two Interstates is adding two new managed lanes, exactly as called for in our region's approved long-term plan and as MDOT is now studying as part of the TRP. It is also the only approach that offers a built-in financing mechanism using a P3 structure so it could actually be funded and built right now.

Every prior regional study has shown our region will need more highway lanes in these corridors to be able to function in the years ahead, no matter how much more we invest in transit (and we already spend twice as much on transit as we spend on roads in this region, even though transit carries just 8% of the daily trips). The Purple Line is a great and much needed project, but it will not reduce congestion on I-495 to any measurable degree. The Purple Line Final Environmental Impact Statement itself concluded this (although it has other benefits). No combination of light-rail, heavy rail, land-use changes, or new bus service on surrounding roads has ever been shown to materially improve congestion on the Beltway or I-270. None. Ever. Period. The region's Transportation Planning Board has confirmed this in their studies as well as several previous environmental impact studies on the I-495 corridor by MDOT.

Any way you look at it, new managed toll lanes will have to be part of the solution, especially when one considers the State's fiscal position, which is why the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments' (COG) Transportation Planning Board (TPB) approved a new long-range plan (Visualize 2045) in 2017 that includes adding new managed lanes and express-bus service using the new lanes. This plan is exactly what this bill would seek to effectively block, denying us the only realistic solution anyone has yet put forward to deal with the traffic nightmare we call the Beltway.

Fourth, now is not the time to go back to square one with a change of this magnitude to the approval process, after years of effort and investment have already been made at the state and federal level and by private sector firms interested in the P3 program. A full Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) is due on this in the Spring and it will contain much more detailed information on all the alternatives this study (and many previous studies) have examined. What we already know is that transit alone is not a viable solution to congestion on these interstates, and the proposed new lanes with dedicated express-bus service using the new lanes, would cut average delays by up to 35%. We also know there is significant private-sector interest in participating, but a change like this could undo all of that. After the DEIS comes out, we will know much more, so it would make more sense to hold off on legislation aimed at stopping this process or subjecting it to further delay by giving counties veto authority at least until this new study is complete. There will be many, many more opportunities for public input and continuing engagement from the Counties, who are already participating extensively in this study process.

Fifth, the economic effects of this legislation are significant and extremely costly. By delaying real traffic relief, this bill would doom Frederick, Montgomery and Prince George's County residents to decades of crippling congestion that will limit future growth in employment, business investment and surrounding property values for homeowners and commercial properties, and prevent local employers from attracting the talent and customers they need from across the region in order to thrive and grow. The cost of congestion is roughly \$2,000 per resident per year. And don't forget the tens of thousands of new, high-paying construction and engineering jobs major projects like this would bring. They won't happen if this bill is approved. In short, this bill is a major job killer for the local construction industry.

Finally, we have a serious concern on the matter of precedent. If one or more counties wish to get into the business of exerting sole veto power over State and federal agencies who are charged with planning and

maintaining Maryland's (and the nation's) EXISTING Interstate Highway system, does that mean those counties now also want to also take on the responsibility to start paying for these roads? Is this really a function that local counties should (or even want to) get into, and are they even equipped to do so? What capabilities (or interest) do County planners have for designing a functioning interstate system? Answer: None. Their focus is on their own local networks, as it should be.

Interstates serve a bigger purpose, a purpose that includes moving goods and freight up and down the East Coast. I-495 is part of the I-95 corridor, connecting Maine to Florida, and is among the most heavily used interstate corridors in the U.S., so its functions go well beyond any one County's interests. That is why such decisions should continue to be made by the state and federal agencies responsible for funding them, not any one county they pass through. Just think of the chaos that would ensue if every County in America did this. We would cease to have a functioning Interstate system at all, or AMTRAK. This bill would set a disastrous precedent and would only ensure that DC-area residents in Maryland remain mired in gridlock for decades to come, while our neighbors in Virginia continue to make the investments they need to make in their transportation system and reap the benefits of a thriving economy (in their part of our region alone).

Instead, we respectfully urge legislators to get behind the P3 Program to add new managed lanes, and new express-bus transit, especially now that major compromises have reached with several of the local counties. The P3 Program is now focusing on the American Legion Bridge and all of I-270 first, and that is the only phase approved yet by the Board of Public Works (BPW), exactly as called for in Montgomery County and Frederick Counties' recent priorities letters to MDOT. There will also be specific transit service improvements negotiated with the affected counties as part of any agreement that moves forward, as a condition of the BPW's approval. With new leadership at MDOT, many County officials have already expressed a sense that their views are being heard and a new willingness to work with State officials in a more cooperative spirit. This engagement with local agencies is going on now, and has been for some time, with regular staff local transportation agency meetings, briefings and consultations on everything from transit services to exit locations, in addition to hundreds of public meetings that MDOT is already doing. The fact is, there already is significant local input in this program. MDOT should continue to work with the community and local governments, but Interstate Highways should remain MDOT's responsibility, working with the Federal Highway Administration and other agencies as they have been.

In closing, we believe this bill is a recipe for continued gridlock (literally and figuratively), costing us hundreds of millions a year in delay-related costs, and adding yet more steps to an already cumbersome and decades-long study and review process. It will block needed investments to reduce congestion, add more delays, impose higher costs on taxpayers, weaken our economy, cost us jobs, worsen auto emissions, and cause longer waits to get us all where we need to go.

We respectfully urge you to support the TRP and the thousands of jobs it will create, especially now with the recent changes MDOT has made at the request of local governments. We invite you to work with us to insist that the plan continue to be made better as it continues to work through the DEIS study process over the next year or more, rather than simply obstructing progress.

The TRP will bring lasting traffic relief, better transit, and tens of thousands of good jobs to our region, and while there should continue to be local input, there should not be a local veto.

For all of these reasons, we respectfully urge an unfavorable vote.

Thank you.

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Position: UNF

January 29, 2020

The Honorable Delores Kelley
Chair, Senate Finance Committee
Miller Senate Office Building, 3 East
Annapolis, MD 21401

Re: Letter of Opposition – Senate Bill 229 – Toll Roads, Highways, and Bridges – County Government Consent Requirement – Expansion

Dear Chair Kelley and Committee Members:

The Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) opposes Senate Bill 229, as it could impede progress on projects that aim to provide meaningful congestion relief for major metropolitan areas across the state. The bill has the potential to irreparably damage Maryland's reputation as a national leader in delivering innovative infrastructure projects.

Three examples of the type of impact this legislation could have on regional projects that will provide meaningful congestion relief:

First, the Traffic Relief Plan, a project designed to free Marylanders from traffic congestion along the I-495 and I-270 corridors through the proposed I-495 & I-270 Public Private Partnership (P3) Program. This P3 Program provides congestion relief in the National Capital Region (NCR), at no net cost to the state, with the fundamental objective to deliver this project while significantly minimizing impacts outside of the existing right-of-way. Without this solution in the NCR, local roads will continue to be over burdened with more traffic as travelers use apps like Waze to look for options to get to their destinations quicker making the local roads less safe for pedestrians and bicyclists. Failure to address congestion in our major metropolitan regions in the state will severely hamper transit options as well.

This legislation will also limit the State's ability to partner with neighboring jurisdictions on major road and bridge projects to address multi-jurisdictional needs through regional cooperation, such as Governor Larry Hogan's and Governor Ralph Northam's bi-state announcement for a Capital Beltway Accord, which will replace the aging American Legion Bridge with a new, unified bridge.

The practical implication of enacting Senate Bill 229 is that Marylanders in the NCR will continue to be stuck in traffic for the foreseeable future. Maryland simply does not have funding available to provide the kind of meaningful congestion relief without the proposed Traffic Relief Plan. In addition to the forgone project cost of \$9-11 billion financed by the private sector, MDOT will need to invest \$1.7 billion in maintenance and rehabilitation cost over the next twelve years simply to maintain the existing roadways on I-495 and I-270 in Montgomery and Prince George's counties alone.

Failure to address the capacity problem facing this region also ignores the direct cost to Marylanders each day in wasted time and fuel as well as the negative impact of air quality on the environment. The current cost of congestion in Maryland is \$1.3 billion annually, a 33% increase since just 2013. The cost of congestion will continue to rise and compound, costing the State's economy and reducing our competitiveness in attracting top businesses. Failure of this project to move forward will also result in significant lost job opportunities for Marylanders and loss of a substantial investment in the minority contracting community.

The State of Virginia is moving forward with the Capital Beltway Accord by modernizing and extending their facilities to the Maryland border. If this legislation were to pass, it would signal to businesses and hard-working Maryland families that the economic, political, and neighborly environment is better across the Potomac. Without the Traffic Relief Plan, due to the lack of State funding, the American Legion Bridge cannot be addressed and Maryland will continue to be a bottleneck along I-495 subjecting residents living in the NCR Region to stifling traffic jams for many years to come. For the project at hand, passage would jeopardize the ability of the State to engage local, national, and international expertise and labor to deliver congestion relief to the greater Washington Metropolitan Area to greatly improve the quality of life for many Marylanders.

Second, a Chesapeake Bay Crossing study is being conducted by the Maryland Transportation Authority (MDTA) and is currently in the Tier 1 National Environmental Policy Act (Bay Crossing Study). The Bay Crossing Study will result in the identification of a preferred corridor alternative to address congestion at the Chesapeake Bay Bridge and the evaluation of its financial feasibility. Should a corridor be selected as the optimal location for a new Chesapeake Bay Crossing, the MDTA would be prohibited from constructing a new bridge absent the written consent of the counties within the corridor. This could have a significant fiscal impact to the agency given the costs that have already been expended for the current National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) study and the costs associated with conducting a new NEPA study to identify an alternative location. In the interim, the existing congestion and safety concerns at the Chesapeake Bay Bridge would remain.

Finally, the Express Toll Lane (ETL) network on I-95 north of Baltimore. The current ETLs have been immensely successful. Two lanes were added in each direction at the I-95/I-895 junction in Baltimore City to just north of the White Marsh Boulevard MD 43 interchange. The I-95 ETL was opened to the public in December 2014. Since the opening of the ETL section, traffic operations and safety on this section of I-95 has improved greatly. This section of I-95 appeared on the 2014 Maryland State Highway Mobility Report as one of the top 30 congested highway segments, but it has not been on the top 30 list since the ETL opened. The ETL has improved customer service during both the AM and PM peak hours with a reduction in travel time and an increase in reliability for this section of I-95. While the ETLs add capacity through a series of video tolling gantries, all existing lanes remained free and traffic flow (speed of flow) in the free lanes increased significantly. The Maryland Transportation Authority announced on June 15, 2018 a \$1.1 billion project that will add two northbound express toll lanes in the center of the highway from just beyond current end point to just north of the Route 24 interchange in Abingdon, a distance of about 10 miles. Construction on the ETL northbound extension began in 2019. Public update meetings for the program were held on August 5 and 6 of 2019. The project is expected to be open to traffic by the end of 2023 to MD 152, with the full extension to north of MD 24 open to traffic by the end of 2026.

Senate Bill 229 would negatively impact one county's ability to address their transportation needs over an adjoining county's objection of that need. This unnecessarily pits one county against another and could potentially create an unfriendly and unwarranted environment. Passage of this legislation may also prevent regional transportation solutions, leaving growing localized congestion. Counties would be left on their own to deal with transportation issues within their borders if neighboring counties do not agree with proposed solutions.

The Maryland Department of Transportation respectfully requests the Committee grant Senate Bill 229 an unfavorable report.

Respectfully submitted,

Jeff Tosi
Director of Government Affairs
Maryland Department of Transportation
410-841-2850

MACo_INFO_SB229

Uploaded by: Sanderson, Michael

Position: INFO



January 29, 2020

The Honorable Delores Kelley
Chair, Finance Committee
Maryland Senate
3 East Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: SB 229 - *Toll Roads, Highways, and Bridges - County Government Consent Requirement - Expansion*

Chairwoman Kelley,

The Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) hopes to raise technical concerns with SB 229 as drafted. **MACo has not taken a position** on the bill related to its essential aims, but hopes to raise these technical concerns with the Committee and its staff.

SB 229 nominally seeks to expand a limited approval authority for new or expanded State toll facilities – to extend language currently limited to nine numerated Eastern Shore counties. The tenuous interpretation of this current law, including the meaning of “affected counties,” has been a matter of substantial community concern as a potential Chesapeake Bay Bridge project gathers public attention.

Because SB 229 is written into the same section of law as the current provisions for only the shore counties, those jurisdictions are concerned that its passage could compromise the current understanding of that law, and what input it affords to any jurisdiction directly affected by a future Bay crossing project.

As you consider this proposal, we hope that you will consider these potential unintended effects on a matter of great importance to the shore counties. MACo would suggest that were any proposal to advance from the Committee, its best path would be to leave the current Transportation Section 4-407 completely intact, and enshrine any new policy regarding projects other than a Bay crossing in a new, stand-alone section of law (perhaps a new Section 4-408) with provisions designed to effect that goal with no potential for interference with the current law.

As always, please do not hesitate to contact me at 410.269.0043 if more information regarding the local effects of this proposed legislation would be helpful to you and the Committee.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Michael Sanderson'.

Michael Sanderson
Executive Director, MACo

CC: The Honorable Susan Lee, Maryland State Senate
The Honorable Members, Finance Committee, Maryland State Senate
Staff, Finance Committee, Maryland State Senate

CLARIFYING AMENDMENT SUGGESTED BY MACo

On page 1, strike in their entirety lines 8 through 12 and substitute:

“BY adding to
Article – Transportation 10 Section 4-408
Annotated Code of Maryland
(2015 Replacement Volume and 2019 Supplement).”

On pages 1 and 2, strike in their entirety the lines beginning with page 1 line 16 down through page 2 line 9, and substitute:

“~~4-408. A STATE AGENCY, INCLUDING THE AUTHORITY, MAY NOT CONSTRUCT ANY TOLL ROAD, TOLL HIGHWAY, OR TOLL BRIDGE WITHOUT THE EXPRESS CONSENT OF A MAJORITY OF THE GOVERNMENTS OF THE AFFECTED COUNTIES.~~”