

SierraClub_FAV_SB54820200212111236

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Position: FAV



Maryland Chapter

7338 Baltimore Avenue, Suite 102
College Park, MD 20740-3211

Committee: Finance

Testimony on: SB548 - "Transportation – I-270 Commuter Bus Route Study"

Position: Favorable

Hearing Date: February 12, 2020

The Maryland Chapter of the Sierra Club strongly supports SB548, which would require the Maryland Department of Transportation to study and make recommendations on the feasibility of establishing commuter bus routes along the I-270 corridor that would serve population and job centers from Frederick County through Montgomery County and into Northern Virginia.

There is no doubt that traffic congestion is a problem along the I-270 corridor now, especially during rush hour periods in the morning and late afternoon. Not only does congestion often result in traffic back-ups and delays on that corridor, but increased climate and health-damaging air pollution is coming from the tailpipes of vehicles stuck in slow-moving traffic versus vehicles not caught in traffic congestion.

The Governor's solution to the traffic congestion problem includes having a public-private partnership (P3) construct four "managed" toll lanes (two in each direction) on I-270 extending along I-495 and across a rebuilt American Legion Bridge into Northern Virginia. Whether or not his proposal or some version of it ultimately is approved, commuter buses traveling on HOV or toll lanes on I-270 (free to commuter buses) would provide a much needed service to residents who live in or commute through that corridor, would lessen congestion on that corridor, and would result in far less air pollution being generated because fewer people would be driving their cars.

Transportation is now the primary contributor to greenhouse gas emissions in our state, so getting individuals out of their cars and onto transit would be a positive development for our environment.

The bill calls for the study to include identifying the start and end point for the commuter bus routes, including potential bus stops in between. Those bus stops would be population and job centers, but also could be park and ride locations which would increase accessibility and ridership for the commuter buses.

A particularly good feature of the bill is that it calls for consultation with city and county governments along the I-270 corridor, as well as WMATA, residents of Frederick and Montgomery County, and representatives of the local business community. Consultation with these many groups and residents would provide invaluable insights into how a commuter bus service along the I-270 corridor could best address their needs.

In summary, commuter bus routes along the I-270 corridor from Frederick to Northern Virginia would seem to make a lot of sense for many reasons. Having MDOT study and make recommendations on the feasibility of creating these bus routes is a very deserving proposal. We urge the Committee to issue a favorable report on this legislation.

Brian Ditzler
Transportation Committee Chair
Brian.Ditzler@MDSierra.org

Josh Tulkin
Chapter Director
Josh.Tulkin@MDSierra.org

Founded in 1892, the Sierra Club is America's oldest and largest grassroots environmental organization. The Maryland Chapter has about 70,000 members and supporters, and the Sierra Club nationwide has more than 800,000 members.

FrederickCoCEGardner_Support_SB0548

Uploaded by: Gardner, Jan

Position: FAV



JAN H. GARDNER
Frederick County
Executive

SB 548

**Transportation – I-270 –
Commuter Bus Route**

County Position: SUPPORT

Date: February 12, 2020
Committee: Finance

Frederick County Executive Jan Gardner urges your **SUPPORT** for Senate Bill 548 – Transportation – I-270 Commuter Bus Route.

We have long advocated for the need to connect the City of Frederick and Frederick County to the D.C. region by a more robust transit system, beyond weekday service during peak traffic hours. The I-270 corridor contains the second, third, and fourth largest cities in Maryland, Frederick, Gaithersburg, and Rockville, respectively, yet the cities of Frederick and Gaithersburg remain connected to the D.C. region only by limited train and commuter bus service.

County Executive Gardner supports the provisions in the proposed legislation that:

- Addresses the need for a more robust transit service, especially in combination with Electronic Toll Lanes (ETLs) on I-270 as the least expensive way to provide the much-needed transit connection between Frederick and the D.C. suburbs;
- Builds on the existing work of the Maryland Department of Transportation Secretary's Managed Lanes Transit Work Group, studying the viability of Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) in the I-270 and I-495 corridors; and
- Builds on the existing work of the Montgomery County Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission's (M-NCPPC) functional master plan to study BRT from the City of Frederick to Tysons Corner, VA, and connecting the Metrorail Red and Silver Lines and North Bethesda.

Frederick County Executive Gardner urges favorable **SUPPORT** for Senate Bill 548.

CoalitionForSmarterGrowth_FAV_SB548

Uploaded by: Lyons, Jane

Position: FAV

February 12, 2020

Finance Committee
Miller Senate Office Building, 3 East
Annapolis, MD 21401

SB 548, Transportation – I-270 Commuter Bus Route Study (Support)

Testimony for February 12, 2020

Jane Lyons, Maryland Advocacy Manager

Thank you, Chair Kelley, Vice Chair Feldman, and Finance Committee members. This testimony on behalf of the Coalition for Smarter Growth, the leading organization in the D.C. region advocating for walkable, inclusive, transit-oriented communities. We support the continuous improvement of Maryland's commuter bus service as an avenue for a more sustainable, prosperous future.

SB 548 would require the Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) to study and make recommendations on the feasibility of establishing a commuter bus route that connects Maryland residents along the I-270 corridor to job centers in Northern Virginia. Currently, there are no commuter buses or any express bus service that crosses from Maryland into Virginia, despite Northern Virginia emerging as a major employment hub.

Increased commuter bus service will position Maryland as a competitive location for new jobs and housing as the DC region continues to grow. Although Maryland was not selected for Amazon's HQ2, we can still take advantage of its proximity in National Landing by providing convenient public transit options from Maryland.

Along with being a tool for economic development, commuter buses help to relieve congestion and protect the environment by taking single-occupancy vehicles off the road. At a time when the state is considering an \$11 billion project to add new express toll lanes in a misguided attempt to decrease congestion, we need to look at our existing strategies for reducing the number of cars on our roads, of which commuter buses is one of our best and most cost effective strategies.

Therefore, we urge you to support SB 548 so that MDOT will study a more sustainable transportation option that expands Marylander's job opportunities. Thank you for your time.

GWP_FAV_SB548

Uploaded by: McAndrew, Joe

Position: FAV



HB 390 /SB 548
I-270 Commuter Bus Route Study
Senate Finance Committee
February 12, 2020

Position: Support

The Greater Washington Partnership (“Partnership”) is a civic alliance of the Capital Region’s leading employers and entrepreneurs stretching from Baltimore to Richmond that together employ more than 200,000 residents. Our transportation system is a priority for the Partnership as it is essential to ensuring the Capital Region is one of the best places to live, work and build a business. As one of the region’s persistently congested corridors, the Partnership strongly supports a commuter bus route study for the I-270 corridor.

In 2018, the Partnership released its Blueprint for Regional Mobility, the region’s first CEO-driven strategic transportation plan with specific actions that public leaders and private employers can take to address the unique transportation challenges that hold back our region. This includes the creation of a seamless performance-driven tolling network that deploys the same principles for each project, including that toll investments improve the entire transportation system, that they prioritize moving the most people compared to vehicles, and they invest toll revenue in cost-effective public transportation enhancements.

The I-270 Commuter Bus Route Study positions MDOT to implement the most cost-effective public transportation enhancements with the new tolling facilities for I-270, which is supported by the Partnership’s performance-driven tolling approach. We urge your support for **HB 390 / SB 548, the I-270 Commuter Bus Route Study**. Thank you for your support and leadership.

Sincerely,

Joe McAndrew
Director for Transportation Policy
Greater Washington Partnership

TSAC_Support_SB0548

Uploaded by: Steichen, Roman

Position: FAV

February 12, 2020

The Honorable Delores G. Kelley, Chair
Senate Finance Committee
3 East Miller Senate Office Building
11 Bladen Street
Annapolis, MD 21401

The Honorable Brian J. Feldman, Vice Chair
Senate Finance Committee
104 James Senate Office Building
11 Bladen Street
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: SB 0548 Transportation – I-270 Commuter Bus Route Study – SUPPORT

Dear Chair Kelley and Vice Chair Feldman:

The Transportation Services Advisory Committee of Frederick County, Maryland supports the above-noted bill for the Maryland Department of Transportation to study the feasibility of establishing a point-to-point commuter bus route serving population and job centers on the I-270 corridor between the City of Frederick and points south into Northern Virginia.

This commuter bus service would be a valuable strategy in working toward mitigation of some of the gridlock that I-270 experiences from Frederick and through to Northern Virginia on a daily basis, resulting in a healthier environment, more job growth, and a higher quality of life for Maryland residents.

Thank you for consideration of our recommendation.

Sincerely,



Michael Levengood
Chair

MoCo_Wenger_FAV_SB 548

Uploaded by: Wenger, Melanie

Position: FAV



Montgomery County

Office of Intergovernmental Relations

ROCKVILLE: 240-777-6550

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SB 548

DATE: February 12, 2020

SPONSOR: Senator Young, et al.

ASSIGNED TO: Finance

CONTACT PERSON: Melanie Wenger (melanie.wenger@montgomerycountymd.gov)

POSITION: SUPPORT

Transportation – I-270 Commuter Bus Route Study

Senate Bill 548 requires the Maryland Department of Transportation to study and make recommendations on the feasibility of establishing a point-to-point commuter bus route that services population centers along the I-270 corridor and provides service to and from Virginia job centers.

Montgomery County supports this proposal. However, the County believes the legislation could be strengthened if it would also include a requirement that the study address the issue of how buses connect to express toll lanes or high-occupancy toll lanes on I-270. Without planned access and departure points that would allow for direct connections, buses may have to cross over multiple lanes to access the toll lanes. This would compromise the efficiency of a point-to-point commuter bus service so thought should be given to how this may be avoided.

Also, of note, on Friday, the Maryland Department of Transportation released its Request for Quotes for the I-495 and I-270 Public Private Partnership (P3) program. The Committee may want to consider accelerating the report deadline in the bill to ensure synchronization with this major P3 initiative.

Again, Montgomery County supports SB 548 and urges the Committee to advance this legislation.