



TESTIMONY TO THE SENATE BUDGET and TAXATION COMMITTEE

SB 843 I-495 and I-270 Public-Private Partnership – Partnership Agreement – Requirements (Maryland State Department of Transportation Promises Act of 2021)

POSITION: Support

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The League of Women Voters of Maryland (LWVMD) supports legislation and administration action which will make government more accountable to the voters with a strong code of ethics. We believe in an open process that “ensures transparency, accountability, positive community impact and preservation of the common good when considering the transfer of governmental services, assets and/or functions to the private sector.” All these elements relate to the promises that were made at a Board of Public Works (BPW) meeting that uses a Public-Private Partnership (P3) to expand I-495 and I-270. SB 843 addresses the promises that were made at that meeting.

This bill helps to put in writing many of the promises that the public assumes will be implemented with the P3 arrangement and agreed to at the BPW meeting. Verbal agreements were made about; when and how much toll revenue will be disbursed to local governments, the guarantee that transit will be incorporated without charge, that pedestrians and bicyclists will be safely accommodated on the American Legion Bridge, and numerous other promises. These agreed to stipulations are now written into SB 843.

Why is it important to have a bill put negotiated promises in writing? Based on recent experience, the state government has promised some elements in physical projects that residents help fund, and then aren't necessarily adhered to. Approval has been won with promises, then they aren't delivered.

To help the state of Maryland demonstrate government that is ethical and responsive to the residents, LWVMD urges a favorable report on SB 843.