

February 22, 2021

Testimony on SB 843
I-495 and I-270 Public-Private Partnership - Partnership Agreement - Requirements
(Maryland Department of Transportation Promises Act of 2021)
Budget & Taxation Committee

Position: Favorable

Chris Plano of Baltimore, MD supports SB 843, the Maryland Department of Transportation Promises Act of 2021. This bill would put into statute the verbal promises that Transportation Secretary Slater made regarding the I-495 and I-270 expansion. Since the Governor announced his plans to expand I-495 and I-270 expansion, a number of promises regarding the project have been made that were later retracted or shown to be incorrect. Some of these promises include that the project would not take any homes or businesses, all reasonable alternatives to building the toll lanes would be fairly evaluated, and no taxpayer dollars will be used on this project.

The bill specifies that the Board of Public Works may not approve a P3 agreement for the I-495 and I-270 project unless the agreement contains the promises that Secretary Slater made on this project. Some of these provisions include:

- No funding from taxpayers will be used to subsidize the project
- A federally-compliant final environmental impact statement will be available before MDOT asks the Board of Public Works to approve any contract
- Data used to estimate congestion relief, set tolls and inform other matters will be shared with local government planners
- 10% of toll revenue will be made available for transit priorities of Montgomery County and Prince George's County
- Public hearings will be held over toll amounts
- Buses and other transit will be able to use the toll lanes for free
- Bicycle/pedestrian lane(s) will be added to the American Legion Bridge
- MDOT will study the feasibility of Monorail along I-270
- No homes will be purchased before construction contracts are approved
- The project concessionaire will be required to initiate a community benefits agreement

When we build infrastructure that will last for at least 50 years, and likely much longer, it is critical to ensure we make the best possible decisions in designing that infrastructure. It must meet the needs of the community and avoid harm to that community. This bill will ensure that this major project is carefully considered and does not leave taxpayers to foot the bill when it was promised from the start that no public money would be used to fund it.

I encourage a FAVORABLE report for this important legislation.