



**SUBURBAN MARYLAND  
TRANSPORTATION ALLIANCE**

My name is Edgar Gonzalez and I am the Executive Director of the Suburban Maryland Transportation Alliance. I testify in opposition to Bill SB 843.

During the 1980's to 2010, Montgomery County was considered a dynamic model of orderly growth and economic development. We proudly called ourselves the "economic engine of the State", and we were one of the most dynamic and fastest growing counties in the Washington DC Metropolitan area.

One can attribute the County's growth to:

- an expansion of federal jobs,
- combined with the location of the headquarters and major branches of renowned national and international corporations, and
- the implementation of major transportation projects.

However, from 2010 to the present, Montgomery County's growth is behind in business formation and income growth in comparison to all counties and cities in the DMV.

I would argue that a key reason for our slow growth is the existence of one of the most congested road networks in the nation. Neither the State nor the County has had the money to invest in the expansion of our road system.

Now we have a unique opportunity to reverse that situation through the implementation of a Public Private Partnership for improvements to Phase 1 of the I-495 and I-270 Managed Lanes Study at no cost to the taxpayers of the State.

The recent announcement by the State of a selected implementation partner for Phase 1 of the MLS is to be celebrated including the implementation of most of the items presented in Bill SB 843. The proposed Bill ignores the economic reality of the State and creates unnecessary regulatory and impractical conditions to the implementation of a project that promises to be a game changer in the economic growth of the County and the State.

It is important to emphasize that the P3 construction program being pursued by the State involves only the Interstate System in Montgomery County. No improvements to I-495 east of I-270 and into Prince George's County are envisioned in phase 1 of the study.

SMTA urges the Senate to reject Bill SB 843 as being counter-productive to the economic development of Montgomery County and the State.