

**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**

***We, Cheryl & Jim Barnds of Takoma Park Maryland, support SB 843, the Maryland Department of Transportation Promises Act of 2021.***

First and foremost, **we are in a climate emergency**. Expanding highways has not only become unnecessary due to COVID-19's long-term impacts for telecommuting. **Expanding highways will only deepen our climate crisis**. A responsible use of these funds would be for just transitions. In the case of transportation, this means clean, green, public transportation investments.

***If we must proceed with the madness of pursuing widening highways, SB 843 would put into statute the verbal promises Transportation Secretary Slater has made regarding the I-495 and I-270 expansion.*** Unfortunately, since the Governor announced his plans for this expansion, a number of promises regarding the project have been made that were later retracted or shown to be incorrect.

Key retracted promises include:

- 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.

As you know, SB 843 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 Secretary Slater made on this project. Some of these provisions include:

1. No funding from taxpayers will be used to subsidize the project
2. A federally-compliant final environmental impact statement will be available before MDOT asks the Board of Public Works to approve any contract
3. Data used to estimate congestion relief, set tolls and inform other matters will be shared with local government planners
4. 10% of toll revenue will be made available for transit priorities of Montgomery County and Prince George's County
5. Public hearings will be held over toll amounts
6. Buses and other transit will be able to use the toll lanes for free
7. Bicycle/pedestrian lane(s) will be added to the American Legion Bridge
8. MDOT will study the feasibility of Monorail along I-270
9. No homes will be purchased before construction contracts are approved
10. The project concessionaire will be required to initiate a community benefits agreement

Without laws to require it, promises – no matter how significant – can be broken. We need, and are entitled to, truth and accountability – especially in such a significant case: a looming, massive, destructive, and unnecessary P3 project for highway expansion. Thus, we strongly support SB 843.

Cheryl & Jim Barnds, Takoma Park MD