

**Statement by Citizens Against Beltway Expansion
In Support of SB 361
Regarding Public-Private Partnerships – Process and Oversight
Before the Education, Health and Environmental Affairs Committee
February 17, 2021
Barbara Coufal, Co-Chair
P.O. Box 3593, Silver Spring, MD 20918**

Chair Pinsky, Vice Chair Kagan, members of the Committee, Citizens Against Beltway Expansion thanks you for the opportunity to share our strong support for Senate Bill 361, filed by Sen. Rosapepe.

The need for this bill's reforms has become even more evident since we testified in support of this bill last year. As you know, the Purple Line P3 triggered a \$250 million unbudgeted taxpayer bailout when it fell apart. The \$11 billion I-495/I-270 expansion exposes taxpayers to substantially more risk, despite claims by the Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT).

We do not believe that the Purple Line P3 fiasco was a fluke. Independent research shows that P3s continually surprise taxpayers with expensive demands for more support.

To reduce the risk of future and unaffordable P3 surprises, we strongly support provisions in SB 361 for greater fiscal and environmental transparency. We also strongly support the establishment of a Review Board to ensure long-term accountability and give the General Assembly oversight over future and existing P3 projects.

In light of MDOT's handling of the I-495/I-270 P3, we strongly endorse the bill's requirement for federal environmental reviews to be completed before the State can enter into P3 pre-solicitation agreements. We also strongly endorse the provision to prevent P3s from demanding compensation when planned roads and public transport could reduce congestion on a P3 toll road.

Although the bill would not stop the addition of for-profit toll lanes to I-495 and I-270, it will better ensure oversight, protect taxpayer wallets and Maryland's credit rating, and provide greater predictability for future projects that could otherwise have significant negative impacts on our State for decades to come.

This legislation was overwhelmingly approved by the House of Delegates last year. We urge you to report this bill favorably and quickly.