

February 10, 2021

Delegate Kumar P. Barve
Chair, Environment and Transportation Committee
Maryland House of Delegates
Room 251, House Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: HB705 - Transportation – I-270 and I-495 – Prohibition on Toll Lanes (Stop Unnecessary Toll Lanes Act of 2021)

Position: **OPPOSE**

Dear Chairman Barve, Vice Chair Stein and Members of the Committee:

On behalf of our 500-member businesses and more than 45,000 employees in Montgomery County, this statement is in Opposition to **HB705- Transportation – I-270 and I-495 – Prohibition on Toll Lanes (Stop Unnecessary Toll Lanes Act of 2021)**.

Once again, we are faced with a thinly disguised effort to put a stop on the construction of toll lanes, an integral part of the pending P3 program which seeks to alleviate congestion for the region, Montgomery County and Bethesda. Adoption of this bill will completely halt the I-495/I-270 P3 program which is poised to bring needed traffic relief and provide a pathway for post pandemic economic recovery.

This project is currently in the procurement phase and provides the only reasonable solution to improved traffic flow. There is NO State or Federal money that can be substituted for the funds to be derived from the funding source, provided by the private investment and initiation of the P3. The project, as a massive infrastructure project, promises a way out of the post pandemic economic crisis that we will be facing. By establishing roadblocks such as those proposed in this legislation, passage of this bill would threaten the economic viability of the region as area residents lose more time and money due to the ever-present highway congestion. The congestion problem is fixable-don't turn your backs!

Stop the effort ingrained in the myriad of bills aimed directly at the P3 Program. The potential rebuilding of the American Legion Bridge, a key component of this project, will be a godsend to the region. Don't lose the opportunity to offer the region a chance to compete for emerging businesses who view transportation as a key ingredient in their location decisions.

Listen to your constituents, a majority of whom support the widening of I-270/I-495. We urge you to give an UNFAVORABLE report on this bill. Thank you for your consideration of our remarks.

Sincerely,



Allie Williams
President & CEO