

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: HB 703-I-270 AND I-495-PROHIBITION ON TOLL LANES.

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 **HB703-I-270 and I-495-Prohibition on Toll Lanes**.

This is a short and simple bill that will wreak havoc for commuters in Montgomery County who support the widening of I-270 and I-495 under the tenets of the P3 program, the preferred alternative for which has recently been selected. This is one in a series of bills aimed at closing down the process and sticking our collective heads in the sand despite the years of congestion and loss of income and revenue endured by harrowed commuters. If enacted, this bill would completely halt the I-495 and I-270 P3 program. Widening and adding new managed toll lanes to the region's highways has long been part of the Metropolitan's Region's long-range transportation plan known as Visualize 2045. New managed lanes offer dramatic traffic relief as the recently completed DEIS has indicated. This bill would stop this effort in its tracks.

Instead, give people a choice to use managed lanes. Those who choose to remain on the free lanes will ultimately experience less congestion. This approach has been used throughout the country and with great success both in terms of traffic relief and in keeping toll rates affordable. Listen to your constituents. The latest polling of the express lane concept revealed 61% of Washington Area residents supported adding tolls lanes with just 34% opposed.

Private investment is the only choice we have to improve our quality-of-life vis a vis commuting. The State does not have the ability to raise the money needed to complete this major infrastructure project which will bring thousands of jobs and economic benefit to our post-pandemic economy. We urge you to oppose this bill which shuts down opportunity for the region and hope for commuters strangling in traffic that is projected to increase to unimaginable numbers by 2040 if we do nothing. We urge you to give an UNFAVORABLE report on this bill. Thank you for your consideration of our remarks.

Sincerely,



Allie Williams
President & CEO