



**Olivia Bartlett, Co-Lead, DoTheMostGood Maryland Team**

**Committee:** Budget and Taxation

**Testimony on:** SB0843 – I-495 and I-270 Public-Private Partnership – Partnership Agreement – Requirements (Maryland Department of Transportation Promises Act of 2021)

**Position:** Favorable

**Hearing Date:** February 24, 2021

**Bill Contact:** Senator Joanne Benson

DoTheMostGood (DTMG) is a progressive grass-roots organization with more than 2500 members who live in a wide range of communities in Montgomery and Frederick Counties, from Bethesda near the DC line north to Frederick and from Poolesville east to Silver Spring and Olney. DTMG supports legislation and activities that keep all the members of our communities healthy and safe in a clean environment and that address equity for all residents in our communities. Many of our communities will be directly impacted by the Maryland Department of Transportation's (MDOT) plan to build for-profit toll lanes on I-270 and I-495 using a Public-Private Partnership (P3) agreement. DTMG strongly supports SB0843 because it will codify promises about the project made by MDOT to residents of Montgomery, Frederick, and Prince George's Counties, and to the Maryland General Assembly.

In the fall of 2017, Governor Hogan and MDOT announced plans to use a P3 agreement to have a private contractor build 72 miles of for-profit toll lanes from the American Legion Bridge north to Frederick and east to Route 5. The Governor assured residents that the toll lanes would be built at "no cost to taxpayers". MDOT officials promised numerous times in different public forums, including at hearings in front of several committees of the Maryland State House and Senate, that the I-495 and I-270 P3 project will not require any public subsidies. MDOT and the Comptroller reached detailed agreements to amend the Pre-Solicitation Report in January of 2020.

However, MDOT has walked back promises already, and the state has already paid millions of dollars to contractors and consultants. In addition, numerous independent studies have found that the overwhelming majority of public-private partnership road expansion projects require public subsidies. The debacle with the Purple Line P3 agreement is a case in point in Maryland. Furthermore, WSSC recently announced that it will cost \$1 Billion to \$2 Billion to move water and sewer lines to make way for the I-270 and I-495 toll lanes -- costs that will be borne by rate payers, or in other words, Maryland taxpayers.

The purpose of SB0843 is to ensure that the promises made to Maryland taxpayers by MDOT are actually kept, and that residents of Montgomery, Frederick, and Prince George's Counties, and all of Maryland's taxpayers, are fully protected.

Therefore, DTMG strongly supports SB0843 and urges a **FAVORABLE** report on this bill.

Respectfully submitted,

Olivia Bartlett

Co-lead, DoTheMostGood Maryland Team

[oliviabartlett@verizon.net](mailto:oliviabartlett@verizon.net)

240-751-5599