



P.O. Box 278
Riverdale, MD 20738

Committee: Appropriations
Testimony on: HB 1052 – “Transportation – Consolidated Transportation Program - Scoring”
Position: Support
Hearing Date: March 9, 2023

The Maryland Chapter of Sierra Club supports HB 1052 that would add climate change mitigation, environmental justice, and adhering to smart growth design principles to the State’s transportation goals. These goals are used by the Department of Transportation (DOT) to score major projects to determine what to include in its annual Consolidated Transportation Program.

The bill also would modify the current transportation goals by measuring congestion improvement by determining the degree to which a proposed project would increase the number of people passing through a corridor using all modes of transportation. Another change would require an assessment of the potential for a project to improve air quality or reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The bill also would require a determination of a proposed project’s potential to improve access to transportation for persons with disabilities.

Adding the goal of adhering to smart growth design principles to the State’s transportation goals would require scoring to start assessing transportation projects for their potential to attract mixed-use development to existing communities near transit, create walkable neighborhoods and a range of housing opportunities, take advantage of compact design, and preserve open space, natural beauty, and critical environmental areas.

In addition, HB1052 would establish a Workgroup on the Maryland Open Transportation Investment Decision Act to make recommendations on what changes should be made to the quantitative methods used by the DOT to calculate scores used to prioritize major transportation projects.

Updating DOT’s goals and scoring process for determining which major projects to pursue makes sense because transportation now is the largest source of climate-disrupting greenhouse gases in Maryland and our nation today, and a major source of toxic pollution. This means the DOT needs to support more transit, bicycle, and pedestrian infrastructure projects and far fewer highway projects, as getting more people out of their gas and diesel-fueled vehicles and traveling by mass transit, bicycles, and walking is critically important. Adhering to smart growth design principles also is key to reducing vehicle miles traveled, traffic congestion, and pollution that fossil-fuel powered vehicles generate.

In summary, HB1052 would make DOT prioritize more major projects that are better for the environment, would improve public health, and would better serve the residents of the state. We urge a favorable report on this bill.

Brian Ditzler
Transportation Chair
Brian.Ditzler@MDSierra.org

Josh Tulkin
Chapter Director
Josh.Tulkin@MDSierra.org

Founded in 1892, the Sierra Club is America’s oldest and largest grassroots environmental organization. The Maryland Chapter has over 70,000 members and supporters, and the Sierra Club nationwide has over 800,000 members and nearly four million supporters.