

Committees: Appropriations

Testimony on: HB0836 Transportation and Climate Alignment Act of 2024

Organization: Climate Law & Policy Project

Submitted by: Donald M. Goldberg, Executive Director

Position: Favorable

Hearing Date: March 6, 2024

Climate Law & Policy Project supports **HB 836**.

Transportation is Maryland's largest source of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. It is essential to reduce transportation emissions if Maryland is to meet its goals of reducing GHG emissions in 2031 by 60% from 2006 levels and achieving net-zero emissions by 2045. **HB 836 (Transportation and Climate Alignment Act of 2024)** will help ensure that future transportation emissions align with these goals.

HB 836 would require the Maryland Department of Transportation and regional transportation planning agencies to perform an impact analysis to estimate changes in GHG emissions and vehicle miles traveled (VMT) for any planned "major highway capacity expansion project." A major highway capacity expansion project is a highway project over \$10 million that will: increase highway capacity; improve highway capacity through the use of intelligent transportation systems or congestion management; or include grade separation at an intersection.

If the impact assessment shows that the project will increase, or fail to conform to state targets for, GHG emissions or VMT, the Department or regional agency must alter the scope of the project or develop a mitigation plan. Mitigation options include improving and expanding public transportation, creating bike and pedestrian infrastructure, expanding broadband access, and other smart growth strategies. Priority is given to mitigation options that benefit overburdened or underserved communities.

Impact assessments are fundamental tools of sound environmental planning. They are essential for determining and mitigating harmful impacts, especially on overburdened and underserved communities.

Climate Law & Policy Project strongly urges a **favorable report on HB 836**.