

Bill: House Bill 0836

Bill Title: Transportation and Climate Alignment Act

Position: **Favorable**



Members of the House Appropriations Committee,

This past December, the Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) announced a sweeping across-the-board cut to funding for all aspects of Maryland's transportation system. Governor Moore then stepped in to delay most of these cuts for a year, but it is obvious that dollars available for our transportation system are proving to be scarce.

In that light, we urge you to support the Transportation and Climate Alignment Act (HB 0836) sponsored by Delegate Edelson. We need to make the best use of scarce infrastructure dollars. To do that, it is important to focus our investments on projects that meet state and regional goals to advance equity, improve mobility, and fight climate change.

Maryland established itself as a leader on climate policy with the Climate Solutions Now Act and now our attention must turn to aligning state policies with its already agreed-upon goals. Transformation of our transportation sector has proven to be slow and elusive, despite the fact that it remains the number one source of climate pollution in Maryland.

The Transportation and Climate Alignment Act supports the Maryland Climate Pollution Reduction Plan's finding that a 20% per-capita reduction in VMT (Vehicle Miles Traveled) by 2050 is necessary to meet the state's climate goals. To be clear, vehicle electrification is only one part of the solution. Increasing our investments in public transit, bikeways, pedestrian improvements, transportation demand management, parking and congestion pricing, and other strategies that reduce vehicle traffic is needed to meet our climate goals.

This legislation would require MDOT and regional transportation planning agencies to measure and mitigate any increases in climate pollution and vehicle traffic caused by planned highway expansion projects costing over \$10 million. Mitigation actions in the legislation include improving and expanding public transit, creating protected bike infrastructure, expanding broadband access, and locating jobs and amenities near where people live and near transit. MDOT and regional planning agencies would also need to prioritize mitigation actions in overburdened and underserved communities (as defined by the Climate Solutions Now Act) impacted by these highway projects. Such mitigation efforts will help expand people's transportation choices while reducing climate and other harmful air pollution.

We hope the committee finds these points helpful and convincing and we urge its members to **vote for this bill**. Thank you for your time and attention.

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Michael Scepaniak, Co-president