



**Testimony on HB 836
Transportation and Climate Alignment Act of 2024
House Appropriations Committee**

March 6, 2024

Position: SUPPORT

Transit Choices supports **HB 836**

Transportation is Maryland's #1 source of climate pollution and must be addressed to meet the state's goal of reducing emissions 60% by 2031. The **Transportation and Climate Alignment Act of 2024** will ensure that future transportation projects align with Maryland's goals of reducing climate pollution by expanding transportation options.

HB 836 would require the Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) and regional transportation planning agencies to measure and mitigate any increases in climate pollution and vehicle travel (measured as VMT: "Vehicle Miles Traveled") caused by planned highway expansion projects over \$10 million. Mitigation options may include improving and expanding public transportation, creating bike and pedestrian infrastructure, expanding broadband access, or other smart growth strategies. This legislation supports the Maryland [Climate Pollution Reduction Plan's](#) finding that a 20% per-capita reduction in VMT by 2050 is necessary for meeting the state's climate goals.

Transportation is a major driver of climate change and is also a major source of harmful pollutants that significantly impact public health. State transportation investments should align with climate and equity goals; therefore, it is essential to require the state and regional transportation agencies to set goals to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from the transportation sector.

In addition to reducing climate pollution, **HB 836** would protect our health, reduce traffic congestion, save consumers money - an average of \$500 to \$800 per year on vehicle costs - and make smart use of limited infrastructure dollars. With Maryland facing a transportation budget crisis, it's critical to prioritize spending the state's scarce dollars on projects that align with its goals to reduce climate pollution, advance equity, and expand transportation choices.

We strongly urge a **favorable** report on **HB 836**.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Robin Budish". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Robin Budish

Director

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