



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

Date: March 6, 2024  
Position: SUPPORT

**America Walks**, a national non-profit that supports walkable communities and the people who champion them, 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.

Highway expansions pull our country into an environmental, budgetary, and public health crisis. HB 836 represents a responsible approach to transportation that centers community needs. It will shift funding toward community-based infrastructure like frequent, reliable, and accessible public transportation and smart growth that builds homes closer to jobs and amenities, reducing commutes and [reliance on expensive transportation options like single-occupancy vehicles](#). It will help provide clean air and water and make neighborhoods healthier, quieter, and safer.

Investment in the community-first infrastructure HB 836 supports impacts more than transportation; it is a solution to improve affordable housing, public health, and the climate crisis while [creating well-paying jobs in transit and road maintenance](#). 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.

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