



**TESTIMONY FOR SB0131
TRANSPORTATION – CONSOLIDATED TRANSPORTATION
PROGRAM – CATEGORIZATION AND EQUITABLE DISTRIBUTION OF
PROJECTS**

Bill Sponsor: Senator Ellis

Committee: Budget and Tax

Organization Submitting: Maryland Legislative Coalition

Person Submitting: Cecilia Plante, co-chair

Position: FAVORABLE WITH AMENDMENTS

I am submitting this testimony in favor of SB0131 on behalf of the Maryland Legislative Coalition. The Maryland Legislative Coalition is an association of activists - individuals and grassroots groups in every district in the state. We are unpaid citizen lobbyists and our Coalition supports well over 30,000 members.

Maryland's transportation system has been, and continues to be, a blight on our economy. We have made little to no effort to make it easy for people to get to jobs, and for businesses to attract employees from outside of their immediate area. We have lost jobs to Virginia for decades because we don't prioritize transportation.

There is much work to be done to make Maryland's transportation system effective, especially in the area of public transportation. The projects that we have prioritized assume that everyone can afford a car, and the gas to power it. We know that is not the case. We have too many transportation deserts.

This bill will require the Department of Transportation, when determining what major transportation projects to fund, to divide those projects into four categories –

- Highway and Road Projects
- Transit Projects including light rail, bus, and rail
- Bridge Projects
- Miscellaneous Projects such as infrastructure for parking garages, facilities, and other structures

It also requires increasing the metric for equitable access to transportation for a project located in a minority, rural, or underserved area to 45% to ensure a more equitable and balanced transportation system throughout the state.

Our members believe that all residents should have access to reliable, affordable transportation. **We also believe that the state should prioritize transit projects in order to ensure that we meet our statutory greenhouse gas requirements and also to ensure that low-income residents can afford to get to jobs and school and services. We would like to see this provision added to the bill.**

We support this bill and recommend a **FAVORABLE WITH AMENDMENTS** report in committee.