



TESTIMONY FOR SB0681 Transportation and Climate Alignment Act

Bill Sponsor: Senators Lam and Gile

Committee: Finance

Organization Submitting: Maryland Legislative Coalition

Person Submitting: Aileen Alex, co-chair

Position: FAVORABLE

I am submitting this testimony in favor of SB0681 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 needs a variety of energy solutions to achieve its ambitious statutory requirement to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to 60% of 2006 levels by 2031. The bill would require the Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) and Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) to calculate and mitigate any increases in greenhouse gases (GHGs) and Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) caused by planned road expansion projects over \$10 million. Mitigation actions include a variety of projects, including those that benefit biking, public transit, walking, and telework.

Reducing VMT not only lowers GHG emissions but also reduces harmful air pollutants, and this bill will accomplish both of these important goals. The Maryland Legislative Coalition supports this legislation with the amendments the Climate Justice Wing proffers, paraphrased here:

- Require all VMT estimates be calculated using worse case-scenario induced demand.
- MDE should play a role in developing the methodology for calculating GHGs for consistency.
- Tie the mitigation plans to reducing emissions in line with the goals.
- Require any projects that are contiguous to each other to be aggregated together when determining whether a project meets the \$10,000,000 threshold.
- Avoid double-counting mitigation actions across two or more projects.

We believe in doing a comprehensive environmental impact analysis of major road projects and the Transportation and Climate Alignment Act provides the right path forward. The recommended amendments will hold MDOT and MPOs accountable for ensuring VMT and climate pollution reductions.

We support this bill and recommend a **FAVORABLE** report in committee with amendments.