



**February 28, 2024**

**Testimony on Senate Bill 681**  
**Major Highway Capacity Expansion Projects - Impact Assessments and Mitigation Plans**  
**(Transportation and Climate Alignment Act of 2024)**  
**Senate Finance Committee**

**Position: Favorable**

Maryland Nonprofits is a statewide association of almost 2000 nonprofit organizations and institutions, with members in every county in the state. We strongly urge you to support Senate Bill 681, as a critical component of efforts to meet Maryland's goal of reducing emissions 60% BY 2031.

Transportation is Maryland's #1 source of climate pollution. In order to meet our goals and sustain our environment we must ensure that future transportation projects contribute to reducing pollution. The Transportation and Climate Alignment Act of 2024 will help assure that future projects align with these goals as well as expanding transportation options and mitigating as much as possible their impact on climate pollution.

Senate Bill 681 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 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 vehicle miles traveled by 2050 is necessary for meeting the state's climate goals.

While the crisis of global warming affects everyone, the health impacts of pollution tend to fall more heavily on people living in lower income communities, and particularly on people of color. In addition, transportation policy and choices seldom take account of their impact on the lives of persons with disabilities and those without easy access to personal vehicles to reach health care, education, jobs, or more.

In addition to reducing climate pollution, Senate Bill 681 would protect our health, reduce traffic congestion, save consumers money, and promote 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 and advance transportation equity for all Marylanders.

**We strongly urge a Favorable report on Senate Bill 681.**

