



## **SB0681 - Major Highway Capacity Expansion Projects - Impact Assessments and Mitigation Plans (Transportation and Climate Alignment Act of 2024)**

### **Testimony before the Maryland Senate Committee for Finance**

**February 28, 2024**

**Position: Favorable**

Ms. Chair, Ms. Vice Chair and members of the committee, my name is Michael Loll, and I represent the Green Team of St. John the Evangelist Roman Catholic Church in Columbia, MD. Our group's mission is to care for God's creation as instructed by Catholic social teaching. To that end, we advocate for legislation that protects Maryland's environment and its citizens, particularly those who live in underserved and vulnerable communities. We provide written testimony today in **strong support of SB0735**.

Transportation in Maryland is the biggest source of the state's greenhouse gas emissions (<https://www.sierraclub.org/sites/default/files/2024-02/Fact%20Sheet%20Transportation%20and%20Climate%20Alignment%20Act%20of%202024%20.docx%20%2811%29.pdf>), and produces a variety of toxic air pollutants which affects all residents of the state. Furthermore, Maryland's transportation system is responsible for the nation's second worst commute time. SB0735 seeks to reduce these problems by requiring the Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) and regional transportation planning agencies to do the following for transportation expansion projects over \$10 million:

- Assess the impact such projects have on climate pollution and vehicle miles traveled (VMT), a measure used to calculate commute times.
- Mitigate any increases in climate pollution and VMT caused by these projects.

Mitigation may include public transit, locating residences and businesses closer to transit, building bikeways, or by providing more and better broadband internet so that workers would have to travel less. The bill's goal is to make highway expansion cleaner and less disruptive to the communities impacted by it.

Our church emphasizes creation care and looking out for the common good, and this bill meets both of those stipulations.

Thank you for your time and attention.

**We encourage a favorable report.**

Michael Loll

Columbia, MD