



**Testimony on SB 681
Transportation and Climate Alignment Act of 2024
To Senate Finance Committee**

Date: February 28, 2024

Position: SUPPORT

My name is Michael Replogle and I am submitting this testimony on behalf of the Institute for Transportation and Development Policy (ITDP), a non-profit organization which supports SB 681. I am submitting this testimony as a senior advisor to ITDP's US Program. I also serve as an emeritus member of the ITDP board of directors.

I founded ITDP in 1985 in Silver Spring, MD, to promote more equitable and environmentally sustainable transportation. Today, with a staff of over 180, ITDP works at the forefront of innovation, using technical expertise, direct advocacy, and policy guidance to mitigate the impacts of climate change, improve air quality, and support prosperous, sustainable, and equitable cities. ITDP has worked in more than 100 cities in 30 countries.

I have been actively engaged in transportation policies in the metropolitan Washington/ Baltimore region for 40 years in various roles. I served as Montgomery County Transportation Coordinator for the Maryland-National Capital Parks and Planning Commission for a decade, at one point chairing the technical committee of the Metropolitan Washington Council of Government's Transportation Planning Board. As the DC-based transportation director for the Environmental Defense Fund for 17 years, I was deeply involved in Maryland transportation affairs. After six years as director of ITDP's Washington, DC, office, I was appointed from 2015 to 2021 as New York City's Deputy Commissioner for Transportation. Since then, I have worked as a transportation consultant residing in Anne Arundel County, Maryland.

Today, I am most keenly concerned about how climate change will harm the future for my 5 grandchildren and 4 children, most of whom live in Maryland and northern Virginia. Based on my experience, I say with confidence that only by enacting the Transportation and Climate Alignment Act of 2024 will Maryland ensure that future transportation projects align with state, county, and regional goals of reducing climate pollution by expanding transportation options.

Transportation is Maryland's #1 source of climate pollution. This must be addressed to meet the state's goal of reducing emissions 60% by 2031.

SB 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 (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.

In addition to reducing climate pollution, SB 681 would protect our health, reduce traffic congestion, save consumers money - an average of \$500 to \$800 per year on vehicle costs - and make 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, advance equity, and expand transportation choices.

ITDP strongly urges a favorable report on SB 681.