



**Testimony Presented to the Senate Finance Committee
SB0681(HB0836)– Major Highway Capacity Expansion Projects – Impact Assessments and
Mitigation Plans**

Position: Informational

This testimony is submitted by the Baltimore Metropolitan Council (BMC). BMC is the Council of governments serving the Baltimore region. BMC’s board of directors is comprised of the Mayor of Baltimore City, the County Executives of Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Harford and Howard Counties; Commissioners from Carroll and Queen Anne’s Counties; Delegate Dana Stein, Senate President Ferguson, and Mark Anthony Thomas, who is the Governor’s appointee.

BMC appreciates and supports the intent of the sponsors to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from our transportation system and we look forward to working with them on this issue.

BMC is the host entity of the Baltimore Regional Transportation Board (BRTB). The BRTB is our region’s federally designated Metropolitan Planning Organization. A Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) is an entity created by federal law to provide local elected officials input into the planning and implementation of federal transportation funds to metropolitan areas with populations of greater than 50,000. The BRTB holds one additional designation as a Transportation Management Area (TMA), which designates additional powers and responsibilities to MPO’s representing regions larger than 200,000 people.

Each year, the BRTB publishes its Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP), which is a capital budget document that works closely with the State’s Consolidated Transportation Plan (CTP) to provide federal and State funding to transportation projects in our region. Projects typically are approved in the State’s CTP prior to inclusion in the regional TIP.

HB0836 requires MPOs to perform an impact assessment focused on greenhouse gas emissions on all highway expansion projects over \$10,000,000 before they may be considered for inclusion in the TIP. For all intents and purposes, this includes almost every highway expansion project. BMC, as the host and staff to the BRTB, does not currently have the staff capacity or budget to perform the required analysis. Without knowing more details we are not prepared to estimate a cost for this work.

It is worth noting that the projects in our TIP are nearly identical to the Baltimore area in the CTP. Given that the State is required to perform an identical analysis, we respectfully suggest that the inclusion of MPO analysis in this legislation is redundant and an unnecessary expense.