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February 28th, 2024

Senator Pam Beidle, Chair
Finance Committee
3 East Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: SB 681 – UNFAVORABLE – Major Highway Capacity Expansion Projects – Impact Assessments and Mitigation Plans (Transportation and Climate Alignment Act of 2024)

Dear Chair Beidle and Members of the Committee:

The Maryland Asphalt Association (MAA) is comprised of 19 producer members representing more than 48 production facilities, 25 contractor members, 25 consulting engineer firms, and 41 other associate members. MAA works proactively with regulatory agencies to represent the interests of the asphalt industry both in the writing and interpretation of state and federal regulations that may affect our members. We also advocate for adequate state and federal funding for Maryland's multimodal transportation system.

Senate Bill 681 would create an additional process for all major highway capacity expansion projects where total costs would be over \$10 million, to include establishing a process for performing major highway capacity expansion project impact assessments that must be performed before a project may be included in the into the statewide transportation improvement program or the consolidated transportation program (CTP). If it is determined that the project will result in a net increase in greenhouse gas emissions or vehicle miles traveled, they must develop a mitigation plan to eliminate those net increases.

While MAA understands the importance of ensuring responsible and thorough assessments, we believe that the proposed legislation is unnecessary and redundant, as there are already processes in place with NEPA and the CTP and furthermore, it may have unintended consequences that could hinder essential infrastructure development. One of our primary concerns is the potential for increased bureaucracy and delays in project timelines. The proposed legislation appears to add a burdensome step to an already complex approval process, potentially discouraging investment in much-needed infrastructure improvements. Timely execution of such projects is essential to addressing the growing transportation needs of our State and ensuring the safety and efficiency of our roadways. Unnecessary delays and uncertainties could lead to increased costs, discourage private investments, and hinder economic development in our region.

We appreciate you taking the time to consider our request for an **UNFAVORABLE** report on SB 681.

Sincerely,



Tim E. Smith, P.E.
President
Maryland Asphalt Association