

CROSSOVER BILL HB1070_RichardKaplowitz_FAV

3/26/2024

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TESTIMONY ON CROSSOVER BILL HB#/1070 – FAVORABLE

Maryland Transportation Authority - Tolls - Collection and Use (Maryland Toll Rate Reform Act of 2024)

TO: Chair Guzzone, Vice Chair Rosapepe and members of the Budget and Taxation Committee

FROM: Richard Keith Kaplowitz

My name is Richard K. Kaplowitz. I am a resident of District 3. I am submitting this testimony in support of CROSSOVER BILL HB#1070, Maryland Transportation Authority - Tolls - Collection and Use (Maryland Toll Rate Reform Act of 2024)

Maryland Matters reported on the many reasons this bill should be favorably considered by this committee.

“House Environment and Transportation Chair Marc Korman (D-Montgomery) said the “end result” of the bill will be “to repay the taxpayers of Maryland and allow us to do what many other states do, which is leverage our toll facilities for our broader transportation needs... The House bill requires the tolling authority to transfer \$75 million annually into the trust fund for 10 years. Korman said the transfer repays \$750 million that was pulled from the trust fund to pay for construction of the Intercountry Connector highway... Korman said toll increases are coming no matter what. “We could vote this bill down right now and have it be dead forever, and the tolls will still be going up within the next few years,” said Korman. Korman said the transportation authority will have to increase tolls by 2028 even if the House did not pass the bill. “No matter what we do, tolls are going up now,” Korman said to Buckel. “Will this alter how they have to raise the tolls? Maybe a little bit on the margins, but they got to raise the tolls regardless. But the reality is these toll facilities and their debt costs money.”¹

The Transportation Funding for Maryland is facing a large deficit as further reported by Maryland Matters. “County officials and legislators are lashing out at a plan to cut billions in transportation projects across the state. State Transportation Secretary Paul Wiedefeld, in an interview Tuesday, said the department is **forced to address \$3.3 billion in shortfalls**. To close the gap over the current six-year spending plan, the agency will impose across the board budget cuts, hiring freezes, fee and parking rate increases as well as defer hundreds of millions in projects across the state.”²

More revenue must be found for our state’s transportation needs! **I respectfully urge this committee to return a favorable report and pass CROSSOVER BILL HB1070.**

¹ <https://www.marylandmatters.org/2024/03/16/house-gives-preliminary-approval-to-tolling-gaming-bills-as-deadline-nears/>

² <https://www.marylandmatters.org/2023/12/05/county-state-leaders-lash-out-at-3-3-billion-in-transportation-cuts/>