



THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

Delegate Vanessa Atterbeary

Chairman

House Ways and Means Committee, February 23, 2024

HB1025- Transportation Equity, Fairness and Privacy Act of 2024

Favorable

Good afternoon, Chairman Atterbeary, and Members of the Committee:

Support Testimony for HB1025- Transportation Equity, Fairness and Privacy Act of 2024

This bill does three things:

First, as I have always championed, the bill decouples the gas tax from the consumer price index. The gas already stands at 47 cents per gallon— with another increase coming this July.

Secondly, the bill prohibits the implementation of a per-mileage tax. A per-mileage tax unfairly burdens Maryland's working families and individuals who travel long distances for work, healthcare, and education. Lengthy commutes are often necessary due to job locations and family responsibilities. Imposing this tax would disproportionately penalize rural residents, who already have to travel farther for daily necessities, work, and emergencies. It would also disadvantage those living on the outskirts of urban areas and rural regions, disregarding their unique circumstances. Moreover, such a tax could discourage driving, impact industries reliant on commuting and travel, and ultimately affect the state's economy. This regressive form of taxation contradicts the principles of fairness and equity that should underpin our tax system.

Thirdly, the bill would require that MTA recover a higher percentage of their operating costs. Under the Fare Box Recovery system, most riders only cover an insignificant 13 to 15% of the total operating costs of mass transit. HB 1025 aims to address this by mandating the Mass Transit Administration to achieve a 30% recovery of operating costs by 2028. The TTF is funded primarily with motor fuel tax and was initially designated to provide road and bridge maintenance funding. Still, 61% of the Transportation Trust Fund goes towards mass transit, while 9% of Maryland residents utilize mass transit.

A recent statewide poll from Gonzales reconfirms that 64% of Marylanders want our state government to focus on fixing roads and bridges. It's time to stop the bleeding of the TTF to address the 3.8-billion-dollar deficit. I am asking for a favorable report on HB 1025.