



**Testimony on HB 84
Transportation and Climate Alignment Act of 2025
House Appropriations Committee**

Date: February 4, 2025

Position: SUPPORT

Chesapeake Physicians for Social Responsibility (CPSR) is a statewide evidence-based organization of over 900 physicians and other health professionals and supporters that addresses existential public health threats: nuclear weapons, the climate crisis, and the issues of pollution and toxic effects on health, as seen through the intersectional lens of environmental, racial and social justice.

CPSR strongly supports HB 84, which would cut pollution from Maryland's highway system by investing in public transit, walking, and biking.

One can expect multiple health benefits to result from the enactment of the **Transportation and Climate Alignment Act [TCA]**:¹

- Travel by public transportation is safer per mile traveled than travel by automobile, resulting in fewer traumatic injuries and deaths.
- Protected bike lanes and multi-use trails likewise result in markedly decreased injuries.
- Enabling increased cycling and walking results in the manifold benefits of increased exercise, including improved mental health.
- A decrease in vehicle miles traveled results in decreased tailpipe emission of fine particulate matter and volatile organic compounds, major causes and exacerbators of pulmonary disease.

Perhaps more significant – in the long term - than all of the above is the powerful reduction in Greenhouse Gas Emissions [GHG] that can result from steps like the **TCA**. On behalf of CPSR I would like to place special emphasis on this.

Climate chaos represents an extremely serious threat to our civilization. We are not talking about inconveniences, but very serious changes to the livelihoods of many in the world. The massive fires and hurricanes that we have seen in our country are only part of the picture. Droughts, heat emergencies, and desertification in some regions, and floods and sea level rise in others are already resulting in mass migrations that destabilize nations and trigger wars. As these impacts multiply, there is a real risk of catastrophic changes to our civilization. However, our society is just not taking these threats seriously, as evidenced by our limited policy changes and our failure to fully and rapidly enact those limited changes.

¹ <https://www.cdc.gov/transportation/php/about/index.html>

According to the Maryland Department of Transportation, the current statewide emissions inventory “shows that on-road transportation is the single largest GHG emissions generator in Maryland, representing 36% of total GHG emissions.”² Therefore, that is where we should act if we are actually going to try to decrease our contribution to climate change. The **Transportation and Climate Alignment Act** is one step to doing this. It presents MDOT with significant tasks. But if we are going to take the climate crisis seriously, then we are called upon to take serious action.

Our motto at CPSR, and a fundamental principle of public health, is that **we must prevent what we cannot cure**. The eminent German physician and legislator Rudolf Virchow opined that “politics is nothing else but medicine on a large scale.” Therefore, we physicians wish to join you legislators in working to prevent what we cannot cure by taking the step of giving a **favorable report on HB 84**.

Terrence T. Fitzgerald, MD

²[https://www.mdot.maryland.gov/tso/pages/Index.aspx?PageId=88#:~:text=The%20current%20statewide%20emissions%20inventory,rail\)%20represents%20another%204%20percent](https://www.mdot.maryland.gov/tso/pages/Index.aspx?PageId=88#:~:text=The%20current%20statewide%20emissions%20inventory,rail)%20represents%20another%204%20percent)