



Committee: Budget and Taxation

**Testimony on: SB 198 Transportation - Consolidated Transportation Program - Prioritization
(Transportation Investment Priorities Act of 2025)**

Position: Support

Hearing Date: January 29, 2025

The Maryland Chapter of the Sierra Club supports the Transportation Investment Priorities Act of 2025. The Maryland Open Transportation Investment Decision Act currently requires the Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) to evaluate and score major transportation projects considered for the Consolidated Transportation Program (CTP), MDOT's six-year capital budget. This current process does not tie the scores to MDOT's funding decisions, nor does it provide adequate transparency on the scoring method and why certain projects are included or removed from the CTP. Additionally, the current system does not require projects to be evaluated based on their impact on climate change. This is particularly problematic given that transportation is the largest source of climate pollution in the state.

SB 198 addresses these shortcomings of the current process. It would increase the transparency of spending decisions by creating a streamlined process for local governments to make funding requests and requiring MDOT respond to each request with information on how the project was evaluated. It would also require MDOT to create a new process to evaluate projects for their impacts on safety, accessibility and mobility, climate change and the environment, social equity, economic development, land use, and transportation demand management.

The bill would also restructure the current Transportation Commission and expand their responsibilities to include reviewing and making recommendations on the prioritization process, operating and capital budget updates, and MDOT's long-term plan known as the Maryland Transportation Plan (MTP).

Additionally, the bill would encourage a more streamlined approach for identifying and prioritizing maintenance ("state of good repair") projects. It would require the Maryland Transit Administration (MTA) and the Maryland State Highway Administration (SHA) to implement a risk-based system to identify and prioritize investments to achieve a state of good repair. This is an important step to making progress on the state's deferred maintenance backlog. MTA reported a deferred maintenance backlog of more than \$1.8 billion in the 2022 Capital Needs Inventory.

We urge a **favorable** report on SB 198.

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