



## Senate Bill 198

### *Transportation - Consolidated Transportation Program – Prioritization (Transportation Investment Priorities Act of 2025)*

MACo Position: **SUPPORT**  
**WITH AMENDMENTS**

To: Budget & Taxation Committee

Date: January 29, 2025

From: Dominic J. Butchko and Kevin Kinnally

The Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) **SUPPORTS SB 198 WITH AMENDMENTS**. This bill realigns the prioritization “scoring” formula and county application requirements for the funding from the Consolidated Transportation Program (CTP), Maryland’s six-year capital budget for major transportation projects.

Major projects affected by the bill, essentially those targeting capacity or congestion, would be “scored” using a detailed and rigid statutory scheme. The bill enumerates a variety of sensible metrics to be part of this analysis for each project. However, it also includes a number of specific standards or calculations that apply to certain modes or projects, but not others. As a result, the multiple scoring tenets within SB 198 would likely redirect more resources to Maryland’s urban/suburban core – completely discounting the priorities of rural communities, which are usually in more dire need of funding assistance. If the scoring system is followed to its implied conclusion, many parts of the state may find top priorities perpetually overlooked for other areas’ whose expansions are simply better suited to these specific and narrowly defined categories that do not account for regional differences.

The Commonwealth of Virginia, whose “Smart Scale” program is among the models for this Maryland proposal, recognized these potential shortcomings in a single-score system, and created a district-based component to its allocation process. SB 198 includes no comparable provision. Testifying before the recent Transportation Revenue and Infrastructure Needs Commission, MACo also urged a process that would avoid creating technical barriers that could keep smaller jurisdictions from being able to properly identify and assess local priorities for State consideration. A burdensome application process should not be the *de facto* driver of infrastructure investment decisions. MACo urges attention to both of these concerns via bill amendments, and stands ready to collaborate with the Committee to that end.

An understandable and practical scoring system for major capital projects may serve many interests. As drafted, counties are wary of unwarranted regional and barricading effects. Accordingly, MACo urges the Committee to issue a **FAVORABLE WITH AMENDMENTS** report for SB 198, and help ensure broad, fair participation from all Maryland regions and modes.