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March 27, 2025

SUPPORT: HB 84 - Transportation - Major Highway Capacity Expansion Projects and Impact Assessments (Transportation and Climate Alignment Act of 2025)

Chair Guzzone and Members of the Committee:

Maryland LCV supports HB 84 - Transportation and Climate Alignment Act of 2025 (TCA) - and we thank Delegate Edelson for his leadership and commitment to reducing harmful pollution, improving access to jobs and essential services, and creating affordable and clean transportation choices for Maryland residents.

Transportation is the largest contributor to greenhouse gas emissions in Maryland and the second-largest expense for families after housing, with its associated pollution disproportionately impacting communities of color and low-wealth communities. Tailpipe emissions, filled with carcinogens, particulate matter, and soot, significantly increase the lifetime risk of cancer, asthma, and heart disease, exacerbating health disparities in vulnerable populations. Our reliance on highways has also led to worsening traffic congestion and air pollution. The TCA provides a solution by ensuring Maryland's transportation investments prioritize clean, affordable, and multimodal options that benefit all residents, addressing both environmental and equity concerns.

The TCA would enhance accountability by requiring the Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) to measure and reduce net greenhouse gas emissions from transportation projects, aligning investments with the state's climate goals. The bill prioritizes investments in safe and more equitable transportation like public transit, bike paths, and pedestrian infrastructure

Critically, the TCA ensures that overburdened and underserved communities—those most affected by highway projects and pollution—are prioritized for clean transportation investments. This approach will reduce the disproportionate impacts of air pollution and traffic congestion on these communities while creating healthier, more connected neighborhoods.

The TCA builds on proven successes in states like Colorado and Minnesota, where similar policies have already demonstrated significant benefits. Colorado, for example, has shifted investments toward bus rapid transit corridors and multimodal networks, reducing emissions by 1.5 million metric tons by 2030 and saving commuters \$40 billion by 2050. Maryland can adopt this legislation to achieve similar outcomes.

In closing, the Transportation and Climate Alignment Act is a forward-thinking policy that ensures Maryland's transportation system meets the needs of all communities while tackling the urgent challenge of climate change. This legislation paves the way for a safer, more sustainable, and more equitable future for Maryland.

Maryland LCV strongly urges a favorable report on this critical bill.