



Montgomery County

Office of Intergovernmental Relations

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SB 881

DATE: March 5, 2025

SPONSOR: Senator Rosapepe

ASSIGNED TO: Budget and Taxation Committee and Finance Committee

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POSITION: Informational Only (Montgomery County Department of Transportation)

Transportation – Regional Transportation Authorities

Senate Bill 881 establishes the Baltimore, Capital, and Southern Maryland regional transportation authorities. Each regional transportation authority is charged with developing and implementing a regional transportation plan along with a regional transportation fund. The regional transportation fund would receive revenues from a combination of sales tax surcharges, hotel surcharges, and transfer tax surcharges implemented in the member jurisdictions. Funds would be allocated to both regionally significant and locally focused projects using a 70/30 split of the funding available.

The Montgomery County Department of Transportation (MCDOT) wants to emphasize the urgent need for greater investment in transportation infrastructure in the State as a necessary precursor for job creation, held back by insufficient mobility and a transportation financing structure in need of modernization. New and innovative models of funding are needed to address the lack of funding available to make necessary investments and alternative organizational structures that might result in more efficiently prioritizing and deploying projects should be considered. MCDOT would welcome serious consideration of these changes, which Senate Bill 881 contemplates.

Certainly, to avoid unintended consequences, the details of the major changes reflected in the bill would be important to better understand. For example, it is unclear how the regional transportation plans would incorporate current local transportation priorities. It is also unclear how the new regional authorities created under the bill would function with their respective metropolitan planning organizations, such as the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments Transportation Planning Board for the Capital Region. Consideration should also be given to enact funding models that can rely to the extent possible on existing organizations to minimize administrative burdens.

Given the strong interest in overhauling the State's current antiquated system of financing and deploying transportation infrastructure, MCDOT urges the Budget and Taxation and Finance Committees to consider stopping short of passing Senate Bill 881 as introduced; but, instead, rigorously pursue the details of how this concept could be implemented to further the State's economic development goals.