



Testimony on SB 395
Transportation and Climate Alignment Act of 2025
Senate Budget & Taxation Committee

Date: January 29, 2025

Position: SUPPORT

I, Karen Metchis, as an individual and representing ACQ (my group of 10 colleagues and neighbors), strongly support **SB 395**, which would cut pollution from Maryland's highway system by investing in public transit, walking, and biking.

Scientists have been telling us for more than 30 years – in fact, since 1978 really, about the dire risk of increasing levels of carbon dioxide and other gases in the atmosphere. Much as the scientist long ago who realized what lead from gasoline would do to our brains, too often warnings fall on deaf ears until it is too late. I hesitate to say it is too late to stop climate change, but it isn't too late to limit the damage it will cause. Our children and grandchildren, and those who (hopefully) will follow, deserve a livable world. The world's families deserve a safe world. I cannot overstate the extreme, urgent, and critical need to immediately enact as many greenhouse gas reducing actions as humanly possible.

Yes, people might grumble in the short term But they will be screaming for disaster relief in the longer term if we don't do this.

Transportation is Maryland's #1 source of climate pollution and the second largest expense behind housing. Maryland families deserve more affordable, accessible, and sustainable transportation choices. By prioritizing projects that expand public transit and active transportation infrastructure, the **Transportation and Climate Alignment Act** will ensure that every Marylander has equitable access to opportunities like jobs, education, and healthcare.

SB 395 would require the Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) to measure the greenhouse gas emissions of all major transportation projects, align the state's capital transportation budget with Maryland's climate goals, as required by the Climate Solutions Now Act. For major highway expansion projects over \$100 million, MDOT must offset pollution with cleaner transportation options - like public transit, bike paths, and pedestrian infrastructure - and prioritize investments in overburdened and underserved communities.

In addition to reducing climate pollution, **SB 395** would protect our health, reduce traffic congestion, and save consumers money - [an average of more than \\$3,000 per household each year on vehicle costs](#). With Maryland facing a transportation budget crisis, it's critical to prioritize

spending the state's scarce dollars on projects that align with its goals to reduce air and climate pollution, advance equity, reduce traffic injuries and fatalities, and expand transportation choices.

We strongly urge – beg you for - a **favorable report on SB 395**.

Thank you.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Karen Metchis", is displayed on a light blue rectangular background.

Karen Metchis

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