



TESTIMONY TO THE SENATE BUDGET AND TAXATION COMMITTEE

SB 395 - Transportation - Major Highway Capacity Expansion Projects and Impact Assessments (Transportation and Climate Alignment Act of 2025)

POSITION: Support

By: Linda T. Kohn, President

Date: January 29, 2025

Since the emergence of the environmental movement in the 1970s, the League of Women Voters has advocated for policies that protect our planet and promote public health. The League believes that advancing clean, affordable, and accessible integrated transportation systems is critical for achieving these outcomes.

The League of Women Voters of Maryland **supports SB 395, the Transportation and Climate Alignment Act (TCA)**, which would require the Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) to measure the greenhouse gas emissions of all proposed major transportation projects, and 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.

The TCA would advance more affordable, safe, and clean transportation options while reducing climate pollution. Transportation is Maryland's #1 source of climate pollution, and the second-largest household expense after housing. Marylanders deserve better options - like walking, biking, and transit - to reduce their dependence on car trips and ensure equitable access to opportunities like jobs, education, and healthcare.

SB 395 would not only protect our environment by reducing climate pollution, but would tangibly benefit Maryland's communities. **Community benefits of the TCA include:**

- **Saving Marylanders Money:** Reducing vehicle travel by 20% per capita would save Maryland households over \$3,000 annually.¹ This puts money back in people's pockets that can go towards meeting basic needs and stimulating local economic growth.
- **Connecting Communities:** Only 8.5% of jobs in the Baltimore region are accessible within one hour by public transit.² Expanding transportation options **connects communities** and increases socioeconomic opportunities by improving access to jobs, amenities, and housing options. This would particularly benefit low-income households and communities of color who disproportionately lack access to these opportunities.
- **Increasing Safety:** A 20% per-capita reduction in vehicle travel would prevent an average of 171 automobile crash fatalities and 2,572 crash injuries each year.

The League of Women Voters of Maryland strongly urges a **favorable report on SB 395**.

¹Warsing, Ryan, et al. "States Can Quantify the Benefits of Climate-Friendly Transportation Options with RMI's Smarter Modes Calculator." Rocky Mountain Institute, 20 Feb. 2024.

² O'Malley, B., Norton, E., & Sweeney, D. (2023, December 19). *2023 Transportation Report Card*. The Central Maryland Transportation Alliance. <https://cmtalliance.org/download/2023-transportation-report-card/>