



CHESAPEAKE BAY FOUNDATION

*Environmental Protection and Restoration
Environmental Education*

House Bill 84

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

Date: March 27, 2025
To: Budget & Taxation Committee

Position: **FAVORABLE**
From: Gussie Maguire,
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Chesapeake Bay Foundation (CBF) **SUPPORTS** House Bill 84 which requires analysis of all major highway expansion projects to quantify increases in greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and vehicle miles traveled. The Department of Transportation (MDOT) must fund offsets to bring net GHG emissions incurred by highway expansion down to zero. The bill also requires that a multimodal transportation program be developed alongside each major highway expansion project to offset net vehicle miles traveled due to highway expansion. The bill has been amended to ensure it applies only to the biggest and most impactful highway projects – those with a total cost of \$100 million or more. While this narrows the applicability of the bill, it is still an important step in the right direction.

Maryland's Climate Pathway document identifies the transportation sector as second only to energy as a source of greenhouse gases. Highway expansion projects usually proceed from an analysis of transportation deficiencies such as traffic congestion, travel times, and general environmental impact of the project footprint without consideration of the vehicle miles traveled (VMT) or induced demand from the expanded transportation network. Increased ease of travel by personal vehicle then inadvertently leads to increased harmful emissions. Under this bill, if major highway projects cause a net increase in GHG emissions, the state is required to fund offsetting practices, such as transit and alternative transportation options, alternative energy generation, and land use changes.

Requiring each project plan to include multimodal transport options will strengthen the state's transit network, reduce the number of vehicles on the road, and lessen GHG emissions and other pollutants entering the environment from highway travel. This additional focus will evaluate whether highway expansion is the proper choice for addressing transportation deficiencies. Finally, establishing a baseline of GHG emissions and then an annual declining cap on emissions ensures that MDOT will continue to move in a direction consistent with the state's climate goals.

CBF urges the Committee's FAVORABLE report on HB 84.

For more information, please contact Matt Stegman, Maryland Staff Attorney, at mstegman@cbf.org.

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The Chesapeake Bay Foundation (CBF) is a non-profit environmental education and advocacy organization dedicated to the restoration and protection of the Chesapeake Bay. With over 200,000 members and e-subscribers, including 71,000 in Maryland alone, CBF works to educate the public and to protect the interest of the Chesapeake and its resources.