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MAJORITY WHIP

Budget and Taxation Committee

Subcommittees

Education, Business, and Administration

Pensions

Chair, Procurement

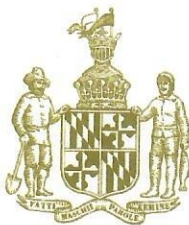
Joint Committees

Audit and Evaluation Committee

Children, Youth, and Families

Ending Homelessness

Fair Practices and
State Personnel Oversight



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THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

TESTIMONY
SENATOR JOANNE C. BENSON
SB935-TRANSPORTATION-REGIONAL AUTHORITIES-ESTABLISHED

Good afternoon, Chair Guzzone, Vice Rosapepe, and the Budget and Taxation Committee. I am here today to express the Urgent Support Needed for Senate Bill 935: A Transformative Solution for Maryland's Transportation Future.

Senate Bill 935 addresses an urgent and undeniable need for an overhaul of our transportation infrastructure and services statewide. By establishing regional transportation authorities, we will create an efficient system to manage and fund critical transportation projects. This bill empowers certain counties to impose transportation authority sales tax surcharges, hotel surcharges, and transfer tax surcharges—designed to generate a steady and reliable revenue stream, ensuring our transportation network receives the necessary funding for long-overdue enhancements.

Key Provisions:

1. **Regional Transportation Authorities:** This bill empowers local communities to take charge of their transportation needs. These authorities will be responsible for planning, financing, and implementing transportation projects tailored to their specific regions.
2. **Funding Mechanisms:** Senate Bill 935 authorizes counties to impose sales tax surcharges, hotel surcharges, and transfer tax surcharges. These surcharges will provide a dedicated, sustainable source of revenue to support essential transportation initiatives.
3. **Accountability and Transparency:** The bill guarantees strict accountability and transparency through regular audits and public reporting. The regional transportation authorities will submit annual reports detailing their activities, expenditures, and progress on transportation projects, ensuring funds are used efficiently and effectively.

Compelling Benefits:

1. **Enhanced Transportation Infrastructure:** Senate Bill 935 is a game-changer for Maryland's transportation system. It will enable us to address the pressing need for road repairs, public transit improvements, and the development of new transportation facilities, significantly enhancing mobility for all residents.
2. **Economic Prosperity:** A robust transportation system is the backbone of economic growth. Improved infrastructure will attract businesses, create jobs, and foster economic development, leading to a more prosperous future for Maryland.

3. **Environmental Stewardship:** By investing in sustainable transportation options such as public transit and bike lanes, we can reduce traffic congestion and lower greenhouse gas emissions. This bill is not just about transportation—it's about preserving our environment and ensuring a healthier, more sustainable future for generations to come.

Finally, Senate Bill 935 is an indispensable piece of legislation that will revolutionize transportation in Maryland. It is a forward-thinking solution that addresses our current challenges and paves the way for a brighter, more connected future. I urge the committee to support this bill with a favorable vote and help us build a better Maryland for all.

Thank you for your time and consideration.