Committee: **Appropriations**
Testimony on: **HB0437 - Transportation and Climate Alignment Act of 2026**
Position: **Favorable**
Hearing Date: **February 10, 2024**

Dear Chair and Committee Members:

Thank you for allowing our testimony today in support of HB0437. I urge you to vote favorably on HB0437.

The bill would require the Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) and Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) to calculate and mitigate any increases in greenhouse gases (GHGs) and Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) caused by planned road expansion projects over $10 million. Mitigation actions include a variety of projects including those that benefit biking, public transit, walking, and telework.

The general thrust of this bill is quite important and we believe it is the basis for what is needed to meet the net-zero emissions goals put forward by the legislature in the Climate Solutions Now Act of 2022. Vehicles make up the largest source of climate pollution from the state's transportation sector and a critical way to reduce that pollution is for our cars to spend less time on the road (i.e., reduce total VMT). We are supportive of the direction this bill takes.

Furthermore, this bill doesn't just look at electric vehicles as a panacea, but aims to tackle the issue of VMT. While electric vehicles emit no tailpipe GHG emissions, they have been found to produce equivalent or greater levels of particulate matter, thus continuing highly harmful air pollutant emissions.[1,2] Also, even with the current phaseout of gasoline vehicle sales by 2035 in Maryland, it will take time for existing gasoline vehicle to turn over, augmenting the need to tackle VMT. Reducing VMT not only lowers GHG emissions, but also reduces harmful air pollutants, and this bill will accomplish both of these important goals.

I recommend a **FAVORABLE** report in committee for HB0437.

Dave Arndt

CoChair Maryland Legislative Coalition Climate Justice Wing

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[1] Woo., et al. "Comparison of total PM emissions emitted from electric and internal combustion engine vehicles: An experimental analysis." 2022. https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S004896972204058X

[2] Trimmers., et. Al. "Chapter 12 - Non-Exhaust PM Emissions From Battery Electric Vehicles." 2018. https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/B9780128117705000121