



HOWARD COUNTY OFFICE OF COUNTY EXECUTIVE

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The Honorable Ben Barnes, Chair
Appropriations Committee
120 Taylor House Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Re: **TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT of House Bill 559:** Transportation - Highway User Revenues Capital Grants – Calculation

Dear Chair Barnes, Vice Chair Kaiser, and Members of the Committee:

Our transportation system is the backbone of our economy and counties are headed toward a fiscal cliff in Highway User Revenue funding in FY28 that threatens to disrupt this vital infrastructure. I want to express my appreciation for Delegate Edelson for his leadership on House Bill 559 (HB559).

This legislation, as amended by the sponsor, would hold harmless counties and Baltimore City from a sudden drop in local road funding on our imminent horizon. Moreover, and perhaps most importantly, the bill creates a predictable revenue stream for the foreseeable future, which will allow counties to plan for multi-year resurfacing and bridge projects that help our residents, workers, businesses and visitors get where they need to go reliably and efficiently.

Local governments maintain in excess of 80% of Maryland road miles. In Howard County alone, we service 1,066 miles of local roadways of which we resurface roughly 100 miles and fill approximately 700 potholes annually. Over the last seven years, my administration has directed more than \$65 million to road resurfacing in Howard County, thanks in large part to Highway User Revenues.

These funds are also essential to maintain the quality and the safety of these local facilities year-round, including storm and snow response. Last week's icy winter weather was a sharp reminder of just how critical snow response is to our communities.

We understand that the State faces difficult fiscal decisions necessary to balance its budget and advance its priorities. HB559 is a prudent and measured step toward ensuring counties have the essential resources to maintain the sprawling network of local roads that carry us all home at the end of each day.

I again urge the Committee's **support for HB559**.

Respectfully,

Calvin Ball
Howard County Executive