
February 17, 2026

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

RE: Letter of Support – House Bill 230 – Transportation Investment Priorities Act of 2026

Dear Chair Barnes and Committee Members:

The Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) supports House Bill 230 as it moves MDOT toward greater transparency, accountability, and data driven decision-making to ensure the best returns on Maryland’s transportation investments. Since first introducing a version of this bill in the 2025 legislative session, MDOT has conducted a pilot scoring round and held intensive coordination sessions with local jurisdictions to inform and refine this proposal.

The current Chapter 30 prioritization process for transportation capacity projects was adopted by the General Assembly in 2017 but has come to be viewed by external stakeholders as an unwieldy system relying on a large number of criteria and measures which makes the scoring process unclear. In addition, once scores are assigned to projects, the relationship between a project’s score and its funding in the CTP has not been evident to stakeholders or the public. This lack of transparency has led to requests for change, including by the Commission on Transportation Revenue and Infrastructure Needs (TRAIN Commission). For MDOT, the current Chapter 30 process also presents certain challenges. The fact that the current process is codified in detail in legislation makes it difficult for MDOT to update and refine that process.

The bill takes three core steps to improve accountability and transparency regarding the decisions that MDOT makes to fund transportation capacity expansion projects.

First, the legislation provides greater transparency and standardization of the process by which local jurisdictions and MDOT modal administrations can request the evaluation of transportation projects. These transportation project ideas are limited to those that will expand the surface transportation system and be advanced to a level of preliminary design. This element has been refined this year and stemmed from local engagement. The bill also directs MDOT to supply guidance and an electronic portal for local priority letters.

Second, the legislation reforms the “Chapter 30” scoring process used to rank new capacity projects in the Consolidated Transportation Program (CTP). Specifically, the bill identifies six goal areas upon which projects should be rated: safety, accessibility and mobility, climate, and environment, social equity, economic development, and sustainable land use and demand management. The bill directs that MDOT develop data driven, analytical methods to rank new capacity projects against these goals and each other. This provides MDOT with clear direction,

The Honorable Ben Barnes
Page Two

goals, and parameters for developing the system but leaves MDOT with appropriate flexibility in execution, allowing the system to improve and evolve over time as experience with the system is gained and new data and tools are developed. Following passage of this legislation, MDOT would issue guidance that discusses the specific scoring criteria and how considerations of mode and regional differences should be considered in the scoring.

HB 230 includes process measures to ensure that the prioritization process is transparent to stakeholders and the public. Specifically, the bill requires that the details of the scoring system be published alongside individual projects scores in the Draft CTP. Following the publication of the draft scores and ranking in the draft CTP, the bill directs MDOT to take feedback through the CTP Tour and allows the Secretary to make changes to the ranking based on policy considerations that she identifies.

Third, the legislation revamps the Maryland Transportation Commission (MTC) with new membership and responsibilities. The bill reconstitutes the MTC to create a body that will act as a regular forum where the scores, funded projects, and scoring process will be announced, discussed, and made explicit. This will include discussion of any changes to the scoring system that may be proposed for subsequent rounds and recommendations to include projects for funding in the CTP that do not align with rankings received through the prioritization process.

Additionally, based on feedback from the Department of Budget and Management (DBM), the legislation shifts the introduction of the draft CTP from September 1 to October 1. This shift will better align the CTP development process with the development of the operating budget.

The changes being sought by HB 230 are supported by a competitively awarded \$2 million federal grant through the Prioritization Process Pilot Program, a program intended to expand the use of data-driven, outcome-oriented capital investment decision-making.

Taken together, the measures proposed in HB 230 help to ensure that MDOT continues to move forward with data driven, transparent processes that will make it a leader among state Departments of Transportation nationally and ensure that Marylanders are getting the greatest return on investment of each transportation dollar spent. For these reasons, the Maryland Department of Transportation respectfully requests the Committee grant House Bill 230 a favorable report.

Respectfully submitted,

Joe McAndrew
Assistant Secretary
Maryland Department of Transportation
410-865-1006

Matt Mickler
Director of Government Affairs
Maryland Department of Transportation
410-865-1090