

**Committee:** Appropriations; Environment and Transportation  
**Testimony on:** HB230– Transportation – Consolidated Transportation Program – Prioritization (Transportation Investment Priorities Act)  
**Submitting:** Deborah A. Cohn  
**Position:** Favorable  
**Hearing Date:** February 17, 2026

Dear Chair Barnes and Committee Members:

I have resided in Bethesda for several years. I am concerned, on behalf of my family, several of whom also reside in Maryland, about the cost of transportation projects and the long term impacts of climate warming. Because the transportation sector in Maryland has significant capacity to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions and HB230 has the capacity to prioritize cost-effective projects based on important criteria, I ask for your favorable report on The Transportation Investment Priorities Act.

HB230 updates and clarifies the Chapter 30 transportation project prioritization program<sup>1</sup> to ensure that public funds are spent efficiently and effectively to support projects that will provide residents, businesses and governmental entities maximum economic and safety benefits from limited Highway Trust Funds. The bill requires the Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) to continuously reform and improve the project prioritization program to increase transparency and accountability by MDOT and clarity and predictability for state legislative delegations, local jurisdictions, Metropolitan Planning Organizations and other entities that propose major surface transportation projects for inclusion in MDOT's Consolidated Transportation Program (CTP).

The bill's definition of a major surface transportation project is designed to emphasize projects that would expend at least \$5,000,000 specifically to increase the capacity of highway, transit or rail systems to move people and goods. WMATA, MTA projects such as MARC commuter rail, and several other projects subject to different evaluation processes, funding sources or reduced emphasis on increasing capacity are excluded. Proposed major surface transportation projects would compete for inclusion in the CTP based on a data driven project-based scoring system designed to maximize public benefit per dollar spent.

To encourage continually improving quality of major surface transportation projects that MDOT, local jurisdictions and Metropolitan Planning Organizations propose to be included in the CTP, HB230 requires periodic feedback to stakeholders and transparency and clarity regarding the project evaluation process. To that end HB230 sets out six policy goals, including safety, accessibility/mobility, climate change/environment, social equity, economic development, and sustainable land use/transportation demand management, all of which would be examined in relation to the project's cost when evaluating a proposed project for inclusion in the CTP. These changes are intended to increase the economic benefits and value Maryland residents, businesses, and local government receive from limited Highway Trust Fund resources used to fund surface transportation projects.

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<sup>1</sup> Chapter 30, Acts of 2017, ([Senate Bill 307](#)); [https://mgaleg.maryland.gov/2017RS/chapters\\_noln/Ch\\_30\\_sb0307E.pdf](https://mgaleg.maryland.gov/2017RS/chapters_noln/Ch_30_sb0307E.pdf)

MDOT has been piloting this data driven project prioritization project and understands that perfecting the process will take time. In addition to the feedback built into the process, the bill alters the composition and responsibilities of the Maryland Transportation Commission, which can review certain decisions and methodologies used by MDOT to rank and select projects under the project-based scoring system and advise broadly on the state's transportation system and MDOT's finances.

To improve transparency and prudent use of Maryland's limited Highway Trust Funds and ensure ever-improving quality of proposed and funded major surface transportation projects, I urge this Committee to issue a FAVORABLE report on HB230.