



# Unitarian Universalist Legislative Ministry of Maryland

## Testimony in Support of SB 59 Major Highway Capacity Expansion Projects and Impact Assessments (Transportation and Climate Alignment Act)

TO: Chair Guzzone and Members of the Budget and Tax Committee  
FROM: Phil Webster, PhD, Lead Advocate for the Climate  
Unitarian Universalist Legislative Ministry of Maryland.  
DATE: February 25, 2026

The Unitarian Universalist Legislative Ministry of Maryland (UULM-MD) strongly supports **SB 59-Transportation and Climate Alignment Act**. We are a faith-based advocacy organization based on Unitarian Universalist (UU) Values, including Interdependence (honoring the interdependent web of all existence) and Justice (where all feel welcome and can thrive). Working to mitigate, adapt to, and build resilience for climate change is central to our beliefs. The **Transportation and Climate Alignment Act** aligns with both of those values by ensuring that Maryland's transportation planning aligns with the state's climate, social, health, and economic goals; and is fiscally responsible. Expanding public transportation will benefit underserved communities with quicker and reliable access to employment, education, health care services and shopping. Reducing vehicle miles driven will contribute to meeting the greenhouse gases mandate in the Climate Solutions Now Act of 2022.

**The Transportation and Climate Alignment Act** advances more affordable, safe, and clean transportation while reducing Maryland's largest source of greenhouse gas emissions. Transportation accounts for roughly 35–40 percent of the state's total emissions and represents a major cost burden for Maryland families.

From a budget perspective, transportation is also one of the state's largest areas of spending. While there will be pressure to continue expanding highway construction, decades of research show that induced demand means highway expansion does not solve congestion and instead drives up long-term construction and maintenance costs.

A recent analysis by RMI (formerly the Rocky Mountain Institute) found that transitioning to a multimodal transportation system would save Maryland approximately **\$550 million per year**, in 2050 by reducing construction and maintenance costs. These savings come primarily from reduced investment in new roadway lane miles and include targeted investments in bus rapid transit, protected bike lanes, and passenger rail.

Beyond cost savings, a 20 percent reduction in per-capita vehicle miles traveled would deliver significant benefits: lower household transportation costs, reduced emissions, improved air quality, and fewer traffic fatalities.

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The TCA passed the Senate Budget and Tax Committee in 2024 before running out of time on the Senate floor. Last year, the bill was discussed in the Budget and Tax Committee but did not receive a vote before Sine Die. This session, please move this bill out of the Committee, allowing time for full Senate consideration.

We urge a FAVORABLE report on **SB 59**.

*Phil Webster, PhD*

Lead Advocate for the Climate UULM-MD

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