



# Montgomery County

## Office of Intergovernmental Relations

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**SB 59**

**DATE: February 25, 2026**

**SPONSOR: Senator Hettleman**

**ASSIGNED TO: Budget and Taxation**

**CONTACT PERSON: Haley Peckett (haley.peckett@montgomerycountymd.gov)**

**POSITION: Support (Departments of Transportation and Environmental Protection)**

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### **Transportation - Major Highway Capacity Expansion Projects and Impact Assessments (Transportation and Climate Alignment Act of 2026)**

Senate Bill 59 establishes an important connection between highway expansion projects and climate change. Modeled after state laws in Minnesota and Colorado, this bill requires consideration of the climate impacts of large highway projects and ties these to mitigation that would strengthen non-automobile transportation.

Transportation accounted for 35 percent of Maryland's greenhouse gas emissions as of 2020, mostly from vehicles powered by gasoline or diesel. Recent federal policies have moved backwards on fuel efficiency standards for new vehicles, which will slow our transition to low- and no-emission vehicles. This bill is an important tool to link increases in greenhouse gas emissions (from increased vehicle miles traveled through new roads) with investments to reduce transportation demand.

The bill only applies to highway capacity expansion projects of \$100 million or more, which would include new roadways, major bridges, and interstate widening. Other changes from 2025 narrow the applicability of this bill to new projects that have not already undergone environmental compliance and are likely to be earlier in planning and design. These changes improve planning feasibility and will help projects consider non-auto investments.

Montgomery County is investing a large percentage of our own Capital Improvement Program in bus rapid transit, zero emission buses, sidewalks and shared use paths. These capital projects are expensive as we retrofit a car-dominant environment to be safe and accessible to non-auto modes, modes that also support our climate goals. With these investments, more people can access convenient and safe transportation choices that reduce our greenhouse gas emissions. We support SB 59 as a way to broaden the investment in clean, safe, equitable, and affordable transportation.

We respectfully request that the Budget and Taxation Committee issue a favorable report on Senate Bill 59.