



SB 59 – SUPPORT

Jeff Mauk

Ceres

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TESTIMONY SUPPORTING SB 59:

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

Senate Budget and Taxation Committee

February 23rd, 2026

Dear Chair Guzzone, Vice Chair Rosapepe, and members of the Budget and Taxation Committee;

I write today on behalf of Ceres to urge a favorable report from the Committee on SB 59 - the Transportation and Climate Alignment Act (TCA). Ceres advances leadership among investors, companies, and capital market influencers to drive solutions and take action on the most pressing sustainability solutions. We organize the Business for Innovative Climate and Energy Policy Network (BICEP), a coalition of more than 85 major employers – including several with operations or business interests in Maryland - committed to advocating for stronger climate and clean energy policies at the state and federal levels.

By adopting SB 59, the Maryland General Assembly can ensure highway expansion projects align with the state’s climate commitments and support increased access to transit and employee commute programs that will reduce congestion and unlock economic benefits for businesses and consumers. Highway expansion is a short-term solution to roadway congestion, and expansion projects have historically resulted in more traffic and vehicle emissions over time. SB 59 is a critical opportunity to promote more energy efficient clean transportation mobility choices which improve access to jobs, employees, and goods and services—all while cutting costs and emissions from the transportation sector.

The companies we work with recognize that climate change poses a significant risk to their long-term success. They are already seeing the negative economic impacts of extreme weather events across their supply and value chain chains and are making plans to reduce emissions across their operations accordingly. Because transportation is a major source of emissions for both the business community and the state, many of the companies we

partner with have made commitments to decarbonize their vehicle fleets over time by transitioning to zero-emission vehicles (ZEVs). However, while ramping up ZEV deployment is an important decarbonization strategy, it is not enough on its own to reduce emissions in alignment with the most ambitious corporate climate commitments or meet the state's emissions limits codified by the Climate Solutions Now Act of 2022.

In addition to driving up transportation sector emissions, highway expansion results in higher operating costs and lower productivity resulting from increased sprawl and added congestion. It also undermines investment in sustainable, compact and cost-effective transportation infrastructure. In 2022, congested roads and highways cost Marylanders \$5.8 billion in the form of auto delay, truck delay, and wasted fuel and emissions. Increasing transit, active transportation modes, and a wide range of employee commute options will be critical to alleviating congestion. Importantly, the benefits of doing so extend beyond businesses to employees and residents. In the Baltimore-Columbia-Towson metro Area, 83.7% of commuters use single-occupancy vehicles. The resulting congestion costs the average Baltimore driver \$1,371 annually in lost time and wasted fuel. In recognition of its negative economic impacts, Maryland policymakers should take urgent action to reduce congestion.

The Transportation and Climate Alignment Act would require the Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) and regional transportation planning agencies to measure and mitigate any increases in climate pollution and Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) caused by planned major highway expansion projects. Mitigation actions could include improving and expanding access to public transit, constructing active transportation or traffic operations infrastructure, and implementing transportation demand management solutions. By supporting solutions that will reduce the number of single passenger vehicles clogging the state's roads, this legislation provides a critical lever to ensure the state maintains a balanced approach investing in transportation infrastructure – one that will benefit our climate and the economy.

We strongly urge a favorable report on SB 59. Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully submitted,

Jeff Mauk
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