



February 23, 2026

The Honorable Guy Guzzone  
Chair  
Budget and Taxation Committee  
Maryland Senate  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Dear Chair Guzzone and Members of the Committee:

On behalf of the Healthy St. Mary's Partnership (HSMP), a Local Health Improvement Coalition (LHIC) in St. Mary's County, Maryland, committed to advancing health equity and well-being across our region, we write to express our strong support for *Senate Bill 59 - Transportation and Climate Alignment Act of 2026*. This legislation would decrease transportation costs, reduce tailpipe pollution, shorten the time people spend sitting in traffic, and increase economic development.

The *Transportation and Climate Alignment Act* would require the Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) to evaluate the impact of all major capital transportation projects on greenhouse gas emissions and invest in more diverse, clean transportation projects including public transit and bike and pedestrian infrastructure. Specifically, the bill would require MDOT to fund climate-friendly transportation developments that offset or reduce the impacts of highway expansion projects on greenhouse gas emissions. It is essential to prioritize this legislation to ensure that transportation projects align with the state's current greenhouse gas reduction target of net-zero by 2045.<sup>1</sup>

Marylanders are incredibly reliant on transportation and spend an average of 31.5 minutes commuting – the second-longest commute time in the country.<sup>2</sup> In St. Mary's County, over 8,000 residents commute out of the county daily, with an average commute time surpassing the state average.<sup>3,4</sup> However, highway expansion projects are not the best solution to this problem. Rather, these projects often contribute to increased pollution, local economic decline, and

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<sup>1</sup> Maryland Department of the Environment (2023, December 28). *Maryland's Climate Pollution Reduction Plan*. <https://mde.maryland.gov/programs/air/ClimateChange/Maryland%20Climate%20Reduction%20Plan/Maryland%27s%20Climate%20Pollution%20Reduction%20Plan%20-%20Final%20-%20Dec%2028%202023.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> S. Smith. (2025, November 30). *Maryland has the second highest commute time in the U.S., new numbers show*. Maryland Matters. <https://marylandmatters.org/2025/11/30/maryland-has-the-second-highest-commute-time-in-the-u-s-new-numbers-show/>

<sup>3</sup> Maryland Department of Commerce (2025, July 15). *Brief Economic Facts: St. Mary's County, Maryland*. <https://commerce.maryland.gov/documents/researchdocument/stmarysbef.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> S. Smith. (2025, November 30). *Maryland has the second highest commute time in the U.S., new numbers show*. Maryland Matters. <https://marylandmatters.org/2025/11/30/maryland-has-the-second-highest-commute-time-in-the-u-s-new-numbers-show/>



increasing costs for residents.<sup>5</sup> Additionally, highway expansion promotes sprawl development, depletes farmland, and diverts traffic away from small town businesses, which has a particularly detrimental impact on rural areas like St. Mary's County. Passing the *Transportation and Climate Alignment Act* would revitalize local businesses and economies, reduce commute times, reduce the negative health impacts from pollution, and save commuters thousands of dollars annually in gas and other commuting costs.<sup>6</sup>

Furthermore, by focusing on improving existing highway infrastructure rather than on new projects, the state could save \$550 million per year in net construction and maintenance costs, even after accounting for the creation of hundreds of miles of new bus, rail, and active transport networks. Investing in public transportation puts money back into Marylanders' pockets: the average household would save over \$3,000 a year with affordable transportation options, such as public transit, walking, biking, and shorter automobile trips. Developing local transportation also assists economic growth by bringing jobs and businesses closer to where individuals live.<sup>7</sup>

For these reasons, the Healthy St. Mary's Partnership respectfully urges the Budget and Taxation Committee to give a favorable report to the *Transportation and Climate Alignment Act* and move this bill forward. We thank the Committee for its consideration. Please reach out to [stmaryspartnership@gmail.com](mailto:stmaryspartnership@gmail.com) if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

*Christine Delise*

Christine Delise  
Healthy St. Mary's Partnership  
Environmental Health Action Team Co-Chair

*Tytiana Snyder*

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Healthy St. Mary's Partnership  
Environmental Health Action Team Co-Chair

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<sup>5</sup> Sierra Club (2026). *Fact Sheet 2026 Transportation and Climate Alignment Act*. <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/62374189eea8707a09d987ad/t/695fd44e6466c65d67a7c9c4/1767887950987/Fact+Sheet+2026+Transportation+and+Climate+people+Alignment+Act.docx+%282%29.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> Sierra Club (2026). *Fact Sheet 2026 Transportation and Climate Alignment Act*. <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/62374189eea8707a09d987ad/t/695fd44e6466c65d67a7c9c4/1767887950987/Fact+Sheet+2026+Transportation+and+Climate+people+Alignment+Act.docx+%282%29.pdf>

<sup>7</sup> Sierra Club (2026). *Fact Sheet 2026 Transportation and Climate Alignment Act*. <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/62374189eea8707a09d987ad/t/695fd44e6466c65d67a7c9c4/1767887950987/Fact+Sheet+2026+Transportation+and+Climate+people+Alignment+Act.docx+%282%29.pdf>