

**SB0059**  
**Transportation - Major Highway Capacity Expansion Projects and Impact Assessments**  
**(Transportation and Climate Alignment Act of 2026)**  
**Testimony before the Senate Budget and Taxation Committee**  
**Hearing February 25, 2026**  
**Position: Favorable**

Dear Honorable Chair Guzzone, Vice Chair Rosapepe, and Members of the Committee:

My name is Ruth Auerbach. I am providing testimony in support of SB0059, Transportation and Climate Alignment Act of 2026, which would require the Department of Transportation to implement clean transportation programs to offset the greenhouse gas emissions generated by large highway projects. I am grateful to the leadership of Senator Hettleman for sponsoring this important legislation.

I recently retired from the federal government, and I am a former bike commuter. When possible, I walk and bike instead of using my car for local trips. Last year I bought an ebike, hoping to replace even more car trips. I also am an occasional rider on RTA buses, Metrorail, and the Ocean City Beach Bus.

From 2014-2025, I was fortunate enough to find work in an office that allowed me commuting choices that included biking and taking an RTA bus, despite living and working in a very suburban community. Unfortunately, these options were not possible for many of my colleagues. Some had concerns about safety on their bikes because of the lack of safe infrastructure along their route. None found the extremely limited public transit convenient.

Many of my office's interns and at least one full-time colleague were interested in using the Camden Line MARC train in their commute, but they found no reasonable public transportation between the station and the office. Some chose to bike these last few miles. Many potential interns refused work at my office because of the lack of public transportation. Frighteningly, during my last year in the office, an intern was hit by a car while e-biking to the office from Greenbelt. I suspect he was on his bike due to the limited trips on the Camden Line. Luckily, his injuries were relatively mild, and he missed only a few days of work. It could have been much worse. My community is very much in need of safe and expanded options for walking, biking, and public transportation.

Aside from providing funds for clean transportation, the Transportation and Climate Alignment Act is an affordability bill for both individuals and the state. The Institute for Transportation and Development Policy projects \$550 million in savings for Maryland by 2050 through building a multimodal transportation network. Governor Moore has issued an executive order requiring every department to counteract climate change. This bill provides a step in that direction for the Department of Transportation.

Thank you for your consideration of this critical legislation. I respectfully urge a favorable report on this bill.

Ruth Auerbach, Ph.D.  
Columbia -- District 13