



## TESTIMONY TO THE SENATE BUDGET & TAXATION COMMITTEE

### HB 437 - Transportation - Major Highway Capacity Expansion Projects and Impact Assessments (Transportation and Climate Alignment Act of 2026)

**POSITION: Support**

**By: Linda T. Kohn, President**

**Date: March 24, 2026**

Since the emergence of the environmental movement in the 1970s, the League of Women Voters has advocated for policies that protect our planet and promote public health. The League believes that advancing clean, affordable, and accessible transportation systems is critical for achieving these outcomes.

**HB 437, the Transportation & Climate Alignment Act (TCA), is a priority bill for the League of Women Voters of Maryland.** The TCA would require the Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) to measure the greenhouse gas emissions of all proposed major transportation projects and align the state's capital transportation budget with Maryland's Climate Solutions Now Act goals. For highway expansion projects over \$100 million, MDOT must offset pollution with cleaner transportation options – like public transit, bike paths, and pedestrian infrastructure – and prioritize investments in overburdened and underserved communities.

The TCA would advance more affordable, safe, and clean transportation options while reducing climate pollution. Transportation is Maryland's largest source of climate pollution, and the second-largest household expense after housing. Marylanders deserve better options – like walking, biking, and transit – to reduce their dependence on car trips and ensure equitable access to opportunities like jobs, education, and healthcare.

In addition to reducing climate pollution, **the Transportation & Climate Alignment Act** delivers tangible benefits for Maryland's communities and economy:

- **Saving the State Money:** Investing in efficient, lower-maintenance transportation infrastructure can reduce Maryland's long-term costs while expanding mobility. By 2050, Maryland could achieve **approximately \$550 million annually in net savings** by building out bus rapid transit, protected bike lanes, and passenger rail.<sup>1</sup>
- **Lowering Household Costs:** Reducing vehicle travel by 20% per capita would save Maryland households over \$3,000 annually.<sup>2</sup> This puts money back into household budgets that can go toward meeting basic needs and stimulating local economic growth.
- **Strengthening Economic Mobility:** Only 7.5% of jobs in the Baltimore region are accessible within one hour by public transit.<sup>3</sup> Expanding affordable and reliable transportation options helps connect Marylanders to jobs, education, healthcare, and housing, improving economic opportunity and workforce access — particularly for low-income households and communities of color who disproportionately face transportation barriers.
- **Increasing Safety:** Public transportation is ten times safer per mile than driving. A 20% per capita reduction in vehicle travel would prevent an average of 171 automobile crash fatalities and 2,572 crash injuries each year.<sup>2</sup>

The League of Women Voters of Maryland and our 2,000 members strongly urge a **favorable report on House Bill 437.**

1. Institute for Transportation & Development Policy. (2024). *Compact Cities Electrified: United States – Brief for Policy Makers*. <https://itdp.org/publication/compact-cities-electrified-united-states-roadmap/>
2. Warsing, Ryan, et al. "States Can Quantify the Benefits of Climate-Friendly Transportation Options with RMI's Smarter Modes Calculator." Rocky Mountain Institute, 20 Feb. 2024.
3. O'Malley, B., Norton, E., & Sweeney, D. (2025, December 16). Transportation Report Card. Central Maryland Transportation Alliance. <https://cmtalliance.org/report-card/>