

**Testimony on SB 59
Transportation and Climate Alignment Act of 2026
Senate Budget & Taxation Committee**

Date: February 23, 2026

Position: FAVORABLE

The Coalition for Smarter Growth (CSG) supports **SB 59**. Our organization advocates for walkable, bikeable, inclusive, and transit-oriented communities as the most sustainable and equitable way for the Washington, DC region to grow and provide opportunities for all. We work extensively in suburban Maryland, focused on Montgomery and Prince George's counties.

Transportation is the number one source of the state's greenhouse gas emissions, accounting for 35% of its climate warming pollution, and most of it (82%) is from cars and trucks. Electric vehicles alone will not achieve Maryland's climate goals without also shifting more trips to transit, walking and biking. This is why MDOT has a goal to reduce per capita Vehicle Miles Traveled by 20% by 2050.

Slow progress toward cleaner, less car-dependent transportation is a major factor causing MD to fall short of its climate goals. Recent UMD climate data show that three years ago the transportation sector expected a 38% decrease in emissions by 2031, but now only a 23% decrease is forecast.

The Transportation and Climate Alignment Act would advance cleaner and more affordable transportation options, while making smart use of our limited public dollars. SB 59 provides a toolkit to evaluate planned transportation investments early on, and, if needed, make improvements to them by giving communities more options to connect residents to jobs and services than driving, while providing accountability on the state's climate goals.

SB 59 encourages the linking of jobs, housing, services and infrastructure investments to provide more compact, attractive, and affordable communities for doing business and living. This approach has been key to attracting and retaining Fortune 500 firms like Marriott and Choice Hotels to transit-oriented locations. These walkable, accessible places also lower the combined cost of housing plus transportation – a better indicator of affordability than housing costs alone. MD workers who can commute by transit save up to \$13,000 per year.

Prince George's County has built an economic development strategy around its transit stations with a major focus on the Blue Line corridor, and Montgomery County has made its bus rapid transit, Metro and Purple Line corridors focus areas for economic development. **The TCA, SB 59, encourages Maryland to design and select transportation projects that support these climate-friendly, competitive economic centers.**

We ask for a **favorable report for SB 59** by the committee. Thank you.

Bill Pugh, AICP CTP, Transportation & Climate Director