



**The Maryland Department of the Environment  
Secretary Serena McIlwain**

***Senate Bill 59 - Transportation - Major Highway Capacity Expansion Projects and Impact Assessments (Transportation and Climate Alignment Act of 2026)***

**Position:** Support with Amendments  
**Committee:** Budget and Taxation  
**Date:** February 25, 2026  
**From:** Jeremy D. Baker, Director of Government Relations

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The Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) **SUPPORTS SB 59 WITH AMENDMENTS.**

**Bill Summary**

Senate Bill 59 would require the Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) to conduct comprehensive impact assessments to evaluate the effects of major highway capacity expansion projects on greenhouse gas emissions and vehicle travel patterns. This requirement would apply to projects that increase highway capacity through new lanes, grand separations (including interchanges), or extend highway lanes and exceed the total cost of \$100,000,000. To mitigate and offset projected greenhouse gas emissions from a project, MDOT would implement a multimodal transportation program to fund sustainable alternatives, including public transit, biking infrastructure, and solar energy initiatives. These offset initiatives would be strategically designed to prioritize overburdened and underserved communities. Furthermore, the legislation would require the establishment of quantifiable annual greenhouse gas reduction targets and obligate MDOT to create a formal tracking process.

**Position Rationale**

Transportation represents the largest source of greenhouse gas emissions in Maryland. Senate Bill 59 would be a crucial step toward considering all environmental impacts prior to authorizing major transportation projects. This legislation would ensure State accountability by verifying that public funding and projects do not further exacerbate the climate crisis. The bill would directly support Maryland's primary climate goals: to achieve a 60% reduction in greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, compared to 2006 levels, by 2031 and attain net-zero emissions by 2045.

MDE supports the amendments proposed by MDOT, which offer a clear pathway for effective implementation by outlining the necessary systems development and phased-in approach for project-level review and mitigation activities required by the bill.

Accordingly, MDE asks for a **FAVORABLE WITH AMENDMENTS** report for SB 59.

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