

**Testimony on SB 59**

**Transportation and Climate Alignment Act of 2026**

**Senate Budget and Taxation Committee**

**February 23, 2026**

**POSITION: SUPPORT**

On behalf of The Union of Concerned Scientists (UCS) and our 7,200 supporters, activists, and Science Network members in Maryland who back science-based advocacy for a sustainable, healthy, and just future. UCS strongly supports **SB 59**, which would cut pollution from Maryland’s highway system by investing in public transit, walking, and biking.

Recent UCS [analysis](#) found that investing in improved transportation options and reduced driving could save hundreds of billions of dollars in energy infrastructure and public health costs across the country, along with \$5.9 trillion in vehicle ownership costs through 2050. By prioritizing projects that expand public transit and active transportation infrastructure, the **Transportation and Climate Alignment Act** will help ensure that every Marylander has equitable access to opportunities like jobs, education, and healthcare.

**SB 59** would require the Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) to measure the greenhouse gas emissions of all major transportation projects, and align the state’s capital transportation budget with Maryland’s climate goals, as required by the Climate Solutions Now Act. For major 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.

[Decades of scientific research](#) have shown that highway expansion projects are financially unwise, harmful to the climate and detrimental to equity. They fail to decrease congestion and stymie local economic growth, while contributing to air pollution that hurts our hearts and lungs. Assessing and mitigating the harms of transportation projects is a key step in making sure the transportation system serves all Marylanders.

It’s critical to prioritize spending the state’s scarce transportation dollars on projects that align with its goals to reduce air and climate pollution, advance equity, reduce traffic injuries and fatalities, and expand affordable transportation choices.

We strongly urge a **favorable report on SB 59**.