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WRITTEN TESTIMONY

HB437: Transportation and Climate Alignment Act of 2026
House Appropriations Committee
February 10, 2026
SUPPORT

Background: The Transportation and Climate Alignment Act (TCA) would require the Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) to make the following changes:

- Fund public transit, bike and pedestrian infrastructure, transit oriented development, and solar energy on MDOT properties to offset pollution from new highway expansion projects over \$100 million. These investments must be prioritized in overburdened and underserved communities.
- Create accountability and transparency about projects that increase pollution and commuter costs by calculating the greenhouse gas emissions from all the major capital transportation projects in the state budget, and investing in a greater mix of transit, walking, biking, and other clean transportation projects to offset increased carbon pollution and align the budget with the state's climate goals.

Written Comments: As the advocacy arm of The Associated: Jewish Federation of Baltimore, we represent organizations that work to educate the community on sustainability and make strides toward a brighter future. Our support for this legislation is grounded in core values of the Jewish faith: actively pursuing justice, "tzedek, tzedek tirdof," and responsibility for future generations, "l'dor v'dor." Transportation pollution disproportionately harms low-income communities and communities of color, thus pursuing environmental and social justice simultaneously, not treating them as separate issues. Additionally, transportation infrastructure lasts for decades, and the decisions we make now will affect generations to come.

Transportation is the second largest expense for most Americans after housing. It is imperative that the state invest in more affordable transportation choices, including public transit, walkable and bikeable communities, and development that bring jobs and amenities closer to where people live.

Across our state, vehicles are some of the largest source of climate and health-damaging air pollution. The state's climate plan includes a goal to reduce per capita vehicle miles traveled 20% by 2050, which in turn would reduce climate pollution by 55 Million Metric Tons (the same as preventing the annual emissions of over 130 methane gas power plants). According to a 2025 poll conducted by Gonzales Research & Media, 78% of Marylanders say they support investing in more public transit and walking/biking infrastructure to offset pollution caused by highway expansion projects that increase driving. **For these reasons, we ask for a favorable report on HB437.**

The Baltimore Jewish Council, a coalition of central Maryland Jewish organizations and congregations, advocates at all levels of government, on a variety of social welfare, economic and religious concerns, to protect and promote the interests of the Associated Jewish Community Federation of Baltimore, its agencies and the Greater Baltimore Jewish community.