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**Written Testimony Submitted to the Senate Budget and Taxation Committee
SB 59 - the Transportation and Climate Alignment Act of 2026
February 25, 2026**

FAVORABLE

Chair Guzzone and Members of the Committee: AFT Maryland asks for a favorable report on SB 59. As we work to meet Maryland's goals of reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 60% by 2031, we can no longer afford a transportation strategy that prioritizes highway expansion at the expense of our climate, our health, and our wallets. SB 59 provides the necessary framework to ensure that our infrastructure investments align with our environmental commitments and the needs of Marylanders.

For decades, the "default" solution to congestion has been to add more highway lanes, a strategy that research shows leads to increased demand and the new capacity fills with additional traffic, leaving us with the same congestion but higher emissions.

SB 59 helps to change this by requiring Impact Assessments for any major highway expansion project exceeding \$100 million, MDOT must evaluate the impact on greenhouse gas emissions and vehicle miles traveled. If a project is shown to increase pollution, the state must implement a "multimodal transportation program" such as investments in bus transit, rail, biking, and walking infrastructure to help offset those impacts.

This legislation is not just an environmental imperative - it is an economic one. Transportation is the second-largest expense for the average Maryland household. By diversifying our transportation options, we can:

- Save households money by increased access to mass transit.
- Reduce traffic time with reliable transit and better-connected communities.
- Improve public health by shifting away from car-heavy infrastructure and its pollution that disproportionately affect children and the elderly in our state.

SB 59 does not stop highway construction; rather, it ensures that when we build, we build responsibly. Again, we respectfully request a favorable report. Thank you.

