

Committee: Senate Budget & Taxation
Testimony on: SB 59 – Transportation and Climate Alignment Act
Position: Support
Hearing Date: February 25, 2026

SB 59 would deliver a number of very positive benefits to the state and its residents.

Affordable transportation options would be expanded because the Maryland Department of Transportation would be required to align the state’s capital transportation budget with Maryland’s climate goals. Increased funding for public transit, bike and pedestrian infrastructure, and transit-oriented development would be required to offset greenhouse gas pollution from new highway expansion projects over \$100 million. Investment would be prioritized in overburdened and underserved communities impacted by the respective highway project.

State money would be saved and household costs lowered because highway expansion (which is very expensive and doesn’t solve traffic congestion) would be lessened. New analysis by the Institute for Transportation and Development Policy (ITDP) shows Maryland could achieve approximately \$550 million per year in net savings by 2050 by building out bus service, bike lanes and passenger rail. Household costs would be lowered because transportation is now the second highest household expense for Marylanders because of vehicle purchase or lease price, gas, maintenance and insurance costs. Increased reliable and frequent transit, as well as increased and improved bike and pedestrian infrastructure would allow more residents to avoid owning a car.

Access to jobs, education and healthcare would be improved by increased investment in efficient, equitable, sustainable and reliable multimodal transportation infrastructure that better serves residents of all economic levels. In the Baltimore region, only 7% of jobs are reachable within one hour by public transit, which means residents of that region are now being left behind.

Climate and health damaging air pollution would be cut which is needed because transportation (primarily cars and trucks) is Maryland’s primary source of climate damaging air pollution. Also, emissions including tiny particles from vehicle tailpipes, tires and brake pads are a major health problem now because they diminish lung function, trigger asthma and other respiratory diseases, heart attacks, adverse birth outcomes and increase the risk of cancer and premature death.

Residents’ health and safety would be improved because reduced driving would lessen the number of crash injuries and fatalities for drivers, their passengers and pedestrians. Public transportation is 10 times safer per mile than driving. Residents’ health would also be improved because of increased walking and biking .

In summary, the Transportation and Climate Act is very worthwhile, would bring many benefits state-wide, and deserves your support. I urge a favorable report on SB 59

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