



**Maryland Office**  
2901 E. Baltimore St  
Baltimore, MD 21214

March 31, 2026

**To:** Chair Valderrama, Vice-Chair Charkoudian and members of the House Economic Matters Committee

**From:** Jim Brown, Policy Director, Audubon Mid-Atlantic

**Subject: Favorable Testimony for Maryland SB 389 - Land Use - Transit-Oriented Development - Alterations (Maryland Transit and Housing Opportunity Act)**

Audubon Mid-Atlantic submits this testimony in support of Senate Bill 389. Audubon Mid-Atlantic is the regional office of National Audubon Society, representing over 35,000 Marylanders who advocate for the protection of birds, bird habitat, and policies aiming to protect both birds and human communities in the face of increasing environmental challenges, habitat loss, pollution, and climate change.

Science tells us birds are in decline due to habitat loss and pollution induced climate change. 1/3 of all Maryland bird species experienced significant population declines in the past 50 years. SB 389 will help Maryland to slow this habitat loss while also protecting the natural climate solutions and habitat provided by Maryland's landscapes. Incentivizing Transit Oriented Development on already developed land such as land near Maryland's transportation networks will reduce development pressures on undeveloped habitat throughout the state. Birds rely on this habitat as do all Marylanders who benefit from the natural climate solutions of our forests, waterways, and grasslands. By leveraging our transportation network of trains, light-rail, buses and shared use trails Maryland will be investing in equitable growth while protecting our treasured natural resources.

We know that transportation is Maryland's #1 source of climate pollution. Unmitigated highway expansion promotes a development typology which is harmful to bird habitat and the natural climate solutions that these habitats offer all of us. To meet the state's *Climate Solutions Now* targets, Maryland must change the way we plan and implement transportation and housing projects. SB 389 does just that.

Transit Oriented Developments promote land-use policies and development patterns which preserve open space, conserve habitat, and allow the landscape to provide natural climate solutions, all while promoting an increased quality of life and better mobility for all of our residents and visitors.

Audubon believes the provisions in SB 389 will enable transportation and housing planners to address the state's most pressing environmental, transportation, economic, and climate challenges by:

- Investing in Transit Oriented Development to create more livable communities while reducing pressure on our natural resources and important bird habitat.
- Help Maryland achieve the goals laid out in the Climate Solutions Now Act of 2022 and the newly adopted Sustainable Growth Principles enacted through legislation in 2025.
- Creating a realistic path to reduce harmful transportation related emissions.

- Consider environmental protection of land and water resources; conservation and restoration of natural systems, waterways and living resources in planning processes.
- And provide for increased housing to meet demand and a variety of market typologies.

SB 389 will lay the framework for creating more climate-resilient communities for our residents and visitors. It will also continue to hold Maryland up as a leader in climate action, inclusive growth, ecosystem preservation, and the protection of birds now and in the future.

Audubon Mid-Atlantic respectfully urges a favorable review of this legislation.

Thank You,

Jim Brown

Policy Director  
Audubon Mid-Atlantic