



TESTIMONY OF:

Patricia Hendren, Ph.D.,

Executive Director, The Eastern Transportation Coalition

REGARDING

HB1374

**Alternative Fuel, Fuel-Efficient, and Electric Vehicles – Highway Use
Fees**

BEFORE THE

Maryland Environment and Transportation Committee

ON

Tuesday, March 5, 2026

The Eastern Transportation Coalition

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Chairman Korman, Vice-Chair Guyton and fellow Members:

My name is Dr. Trish Hendren, and I am the Executive Director of The Eastern Transportation Coalition and a proud Marylander, born and raised. The Eastern Transportation Coalition is a partnership of 20 states and D.C. focused on connecting public agencies across modes of travel to increase safety and efficiency. Hal Kassoﬀ, former Maryland State Highway Administrator, was one of the founders of the Coalition over 30 years ago.

Today, most of us pay for transportation through the gas tax. Every time we fill up, a few cents per gallon go toward maintaining our roads and bridges.

However, as vehicles are going farther on a tank of gas, and some don't use gas at all, the link between use and payment is fraying. For example, our projections show in 2030, 85% of Maryland's gas tax decline is due to vehicles getting better gas mileage. This is NOT an electric vehicle problem.

Because of this, Maryland and other states are exploring a mileage-based user fee, or MBUF. Instead of paying based on fuel consumed, drivers would pay based on how many miles they actually drive. If you drive less, you pay less. If you drive more, you pay more, like how we pay for utilities at home.

This idea can sound crazy. People think, "Am I going to be tracked?" or "Will I pay more as a rural driver?" These are valid concerns, that's why we've conducted that's why we've conducted real-world pilots, data analysis, surveys, focus groups, and household impact analyses. This is what we've found:

People in rural areas would pay less than they do now under MBUF. Why? Today, how much you pay depends on how much gas your vehicle uses, and rural drivers on average have larger less fuel-efficient vehicles. For example, If I live in Smithsburg and drive a 2015 Ford F150, I am paying about \$20 in state fuel tax per month; under MBUF, this would go down by over \$3 a month.

Privacy concerns are grounded in MBUF being unknown. However, once people experience MBUF through our pilots, privacy concerns go down. Again Why? By offering choices that do not require location and having strict data protections in place.

Whether or not you think MBUF sounds like a good idea or not, I'm here to invite you to experience it firsthand. The Coalition is hosting a multi-state MBUF pilot right now. Visit tetcmbufpilot.org to learn more.

Why does this matter? This committee understands that investing in transportation is about protecting our quality of life. Let's do the work together to keep our systems safe, efficient, and vibrant.