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Appropriations Committee
Subcommittees
Oversight Committee on Pensions
Transportation and the Environment

THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

Transportation - Regional Transportation Authorities (HB 916) 2026

Testimony of Delegate Ryan Spiegel – Favorable

Hon. Chair Korman, Vice Chair Guyton, and Members of the Environment and Transportation Committee:

The multi-billion dollar shortfall in our existing state transportation funding model is not sustainable. We all know that the funding formula for the Transportation Trust Fund (TTF), with its disproportionate reliance on gasoline tax revenue, is facing a bleak future. As more drivers choose electric and more fuel-efficient vehicles, and as remote and hybrid work remains popular, revenue will continue to erode. Actions taken by the General Assembly helped bolster the TTF in the short-run, but we are still nowhere near where we need to be.

HB 916 is a reintroduction of a bill you heard last year that would establish a new model to help select, fund, and construct regional transportation projects in light of the ongoing challenges and shortfalls of the State's Transportation Trust Fund.

This bill institutes three regional transportation authorities: one for the Baltimore Region, one for the Capital Region, and one for Southern Maryland. HB 916 offers a robust funding mechanism, a system for these authorities to prioritize projects, and a spending formula that allocates 70% of revenues to regional priorities and the other 30% to individual jurisdictions for local transportation needs within each authority's boundaries. It also gives the authorities bonding capacity to leverage funding streams, necessary for advancing important major projects. Many of these elements come from the Northern Virginia Transportation Authority since it offers strong proof of concept.

The proposed funding source is a mix of small surcharges on sales tax, hotel/motel tax, and transfer tax in each region, again modeled on the Northern Virginia Transportation Authority. This bill ensures broad and varied representation on the authority boards, including state, county, and municipal representatives in each region. This promotes regional choice and allows authorities to address unique needs in the different regions while remaining accountable to region residents. HB 916 also calls for collaboration with existing regional planning organizations and transportation-related boards, to leverage

their efforts and expertise and avoid reinventing the wheel. On inter-regional or statewide projects, the legislation provides for collaboration with other regions and MDOT.

HB 916 has co-sponsors from Charles, Anne Arundel, Frederick, Howard, and Montgomery Counties, and has been cross-filed by Senator Alonzo Washington. HB 916 also requires authorities to invest a minimum of 30% of their regional spending on transit projects.

HB 916 has language making clear that funds generated for these authorities are meant to supplement, not supplant, existing funding from the State. The bill ensures that prioritization of regional projects is based on an objective set of scoring criteria, just as the Northern Virginia Transportation Authority does.

If we want to make much-needed long-term investments in transportation, unlock our potential for jobs, housing, and access to services, increase quality of life in our state, and make more progress on our climate goals, we need to be serious about long-term, sustainable solutions for transportation funding. Now is the time to put in place innovative, proven solutions such as regional transportation authorities.

I respectfully request a favorable report. Thank you.