

HB0916_Regional_Transportation_Authorities_FAV.pdf

Uploaded by: Cecilia Plante

Position: FAV



TESTIMONY FOR HB0916 Transportation – Regional Transportation Authorities

Bill Sponsor: Delegate Spiegel

Committee: Environment and Transportation

Organization Submitting: Maryland Legislative Coalition

Person Submitting: Cecilia Plante, co-chair

Position: FAVORABLE

I am submitting this testimony in favor of HB0916 on behalf of the Maryland Legislative Coalition. The Maryland Legislative Coalition is an association of activists - individuals and grassroots groups in every district in the state. We are unpaid citizen lobbyists, and our Coalition supports well over 30,000 members.

The Maryland Transportation Authority (MTA) has been making decisions on transportation projects and funding since 1971. Given the state of transportation in Maryland, it is more than time for another approach that engages the communities that our transportation system serves. The needs of Baltimore and its surrounding areas are very different to Southern Maryland or the big counties of Montgomery, Prince George's and Frederick. It makes sense that transportation directives should be more locally based.

This bill, if enacted, would allow for the creation of Regional Transportation Authorities (RTAs), which would develop and implement congestion relief plans for their respective regions. There are three RTAs envisioned – Baltimore Region (which includes Anne Arundel County, Baltimore County, and Baltimore City); Capital Region (which includes Frederick County, Montgomery County and Prince George's County); and Southern Maryland Region (which includes Calvert County, Charles County, and Saint Mary's County). It also establishes a fund for each of the RTAs.

Finally, it directs the Department of Transportation to report on the feasibility of creating local-option transportation revenues for the purpose of raising funds for the RTAs.

We support this bill and recommend a **FAVORABLE** report in committee.

HB916 Testimony - Delegate Ryan Spiegel (FAV).docx

Uploaded by: Delegate Ryan Spiegel

Position: FAV

RYAN SPIEGEL
Legislative District 17
Montgomery County



The Maryland House of Delegates
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Annapolis, Maryland 21401
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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.

HB 916 FAV Charkoudian Maryland Transit Caucus

Uploaded by: Lorig Charkoudian

Position: FAV



MARYLAND TRANSIT CAUCUS

marylandtransitcaucus.org • @CaucusTransit
transitcaucus@gmail.com

Officers

Co-Chairs: Senator Cory McCray, Delegate Lorig Charkoudian
Vice Chairs: Senator Arthur Ellis, Delegate Sheila Ruth
Secretary: Delegate Julie Palakovich Carr
At-Large Members: Delegate Mary Lehman, Delegate Nick Allen
Legislative Committee Co-Chairs: Delegate Malcolm Ruff, Delegate Kris Fair

Dear Members of the Maryland General Assembly,

On behalf of the Transit Caucus, we are writing to express our endorsement of **SB 674/HB 916: Transportation – Regional Transportation Authorities**. As advocates for transportation-related legislation before the General Assembly, we believe this bill is essential to our mission of ensuring a more sustainable, efficient, and accessible transit system for all residents. We are confident that its passage will have a positive impact on our communities, economy, and environment.

The goal of SB 674/ HB 916 is to establish transportation authorities in the capital region, Baltimore region, and Southern Maryland. The bill confers to them the authority to levy certain taxes to develop and implement transportation projects in their respective regions.

SB 674/ HB 916 is needed to address shortfalls in the state transportation budget and make transportation funding and planning more accessible to localities. The bill requires a minimum portion of funding to be dedicated towards non-car transportation and would enable jurisdictions to more easily fund projects for pedestrian and bicycle travel as well as public transportation.

Thank you for taking the time to consider this bill. Should you have any questions or require further information, please do not hesitate to reach out to us. We look forward to working with you as we build a better Maryland transportation system for all.

Thank you,

Senator Cory McCray, Co-Chair

Delegate Lorig Charkoudian, Co-Chair

- Members
- Delegate Gabriel Acevero
- Delegate Nick Allen
- Delegate Dalya Attar
- Senator Malcolm Augustine
- Delegate Heather Bagnall
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- Delegate Greg Wims
- Delegate Sarah Wolek
- Delegate Teresa Woorman
- Delegate Chao Wu
- Delegate Natalie Ziegler
- Senator Craig Zucker

HB0916_FAV_City of Rockville_Transportation - Regi

Uploaded by: Marissa Valeri

Position: FAV



Testimony of the Mayor and Council of Rockville HB 916 – Transportation – Regional Transportation Authorities SUPPORT

Good afternoon, Chair Korman and members of the House Environment and Transportation Committee. I am Rockville City Councilmember Marissa Valeri. Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of HB 916. We are thankful to Delegate Spiegel for sponsoring this important legislation.

The Rockville Mayor and Council unanimously support HB 916, which would establish regional transportation authorities in the Baltimore, Capital, and Southern Maryland regions of the State. The authorities would conduct general oversight of regional transportation programs, including priority setting, planning, and implementation of large-scale transportation projects. Each authority would adopt a regional transportation plan that supports mobility, safety, accessibility, and economic development.

HB 916 takes an innovative approach to addressing the ongoing lack of State funding for major transportation projects. Transportation Trust Fund revenues have been steadily declining in recent years due to increased use of fuel-efficient, hybrid, and electric vehicles. HB 916 would raise supplemental revenue dedicated for large scale transportation projects by levying regional surcharges on sales, use of a taxable service, hotel lodging, and the transfer of real property.

We support the revenue-sharing arrangement under HB 916, which would allocate thirty percent of the revenues generated in a municipality to the municipality and seventy percent to the State. The same funding distribution would apply to Counties. These additional revenues would provide the State, counties, and municipalities with the opportunity to make additional investments in critical transportation infrastructure projects. Increased transportation funding would expedite the forward progress the City is making towards achieving its Vision Zero program goals.

HB 916 is an important step forward as it offers a creative solution to solving the State's transportation funding issues. By taking a regional approach to transportation, generating critically needed revenues, and encouraging multijurisdictional collaboration, this legislation has the potential to dramatically improve the quality of infrastructure in our communities and stimulate economic growth in Maryland. For these reasons we urge the Committee to provide HB 916 with a favorable report.

HB916 - Transportation - Regional Transportation A

Uploaded by: Maryland Legislative Latino Caucus

Position: FAV



MARYLAND LEGISLATIVE LATINO CAUCUS

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DENI TAVERAS, TREASURER
JOE VOGEL, SECRETARY
JASON A. AVILA GARCIA, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

TO: Delegate Marc Korman, Chair
Delegate Michele Guyton, Vice Chair
Environment and Transportation Committee Members
FROM: Maryland Legislative Latino Caucus
DATE: 2/26/2026
RE: HB916 - Transportation - Regional Transportation Authorities

The MLLC supports HB916 - Transportation - Regional Transportation Authorities

The MLLC is a bipartisan group of Senators and Delegates committed to supporting legislation that improves the lives of Latinos throughout our state. The MLLC is a crucial voice in the development of public policy that uplifts the Latino community and benefits the state of Maryland. Thank you for allowing us the opportunity to express our support of HB916.

Maryland faces persistent transportation funding shortfalls that limit the State's ability to address regional congestion, aging infrastructure, and growing transit needs. Current funding mechanisms often lack the flexibility to support region-specific transportation solutions. By establishing regional transportation authorities with independent revenue streams, this bill creates a mandatory framework for coordinated, long-term transportation planning and investment. Improved transportation infrastructure would help residents travel to school and work more efficiently, reduce delays, strengthen local businesses through increased accessibility, and support job creation through transportation-related projects and development.

For the Latino community this bill is particularly pertinent as Latino's rely heavily on public transportation, yet face considerable challenges. In Baltimore, Latino and Black Marylanders make up 86% of bus ridership however, public transit can be delayed and unreliable, causing riders to be late to work, medical appointments, and other important life events¹. Additionally, low-income, Latino neighborhoods are more likely to be affected by traffic congestion and air pollution causing life-long health effects such as asthma². Regional transportation authorities, such as the ones proposed in this bill, would be able to analyze the transportation issues plaguing different Maryland regions to propose solutions for Latino and other communities.

For these reasons, the Maryland Legislative Latino Caucus respectfully requests a favorable report on HB916.

¹ WYPR. City students face long public transit commutes to school. 30 Dec. 2021.

² [American Lung Association. Air Pollution Exposure in Hispanic and Latino Communities. 21 Sept. 2022.](#)

HB 916_MTBMA_FAV.pdf

Uploaded by: Michael Sakata

Position: FAV



Delegate Ben Barnes, Chair
Appropriations Committee
120 Taylor House Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

Delegate Marc Korman, Chair
Environment and Transportation Committee
250 Taylor House Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

February 26, 2026

RE: HB 916 – FAVORABLE – Transportation – Regional Transportation Authorities

Dear Chair Barnes, Chair Korman and Members of the Committees:

The Maryland Transportation Builders and Materials Association (“MTBMA”) has been and continues to serve as the voice for Maryland’s construction transportation industry since 1932. Our association is comprised of 250 members. MTBMA encourages, develops, and protects the prestige of the transportation construction and materials industry in Maryland by establishing and maintaining respected relationships with federal, state, and local public officials. We proactively work with regulatory agencies and governing bodies to represent the interests of the transportation industry and advocate for adequate state and federal funding for Maryland’s multimodal transportation system.

House Bill 916 would establish regional transportation authorities (RTAs) in three regions of Maryland—the Baltimore Region, the Capital Region, and the Southern Maryland Region to prepare and implement regional transportation plans for their respective regions and sets up the funding and taxing mechanisms for the authorities.

MTBMA strongly supports HB 916 because it addresses a critical need for funding regional and local transportation projects across all modes. Maryland has a transportation funding crisis and needs new sources of revenue to help fund transportation investments that enhance safety, reduce congestion, improve access and boost our economy. And this bill directly supports Governor Moore’s Growth Agenda. We have seen RTAs as a proven model in ensuring regional transportation improvements. Virginia has used regional transportation authorities for many years, which have been very successful. The Northern Virginia Transportation Authority (NVTA) for example, contributes over \$400 million in project funding annually. It meets a critical need to fund regional projects that are part of approved regional plans, with a portion of those funds going to localities to direct to local projects based on their needs. NVTA is funded through a local Grantor’s Tax (of \$.15 per \$100 of property sale price); a Transient Occupancy Tax (2% of room charges); and a local sales tax (of 0.7%). NVTA can also accept grants, issue debt and maintains a “AA” bond rating.

As the Committees are aware, Maryland consistently faces a financial shortfall within the transportation sector and it is widely recognized that the current pipeline of funding is not sufficient to meet Maryland’s needs or keep transportation workers employed. Moreover, our reliance on federal funding or the potential lack thereof, creates even more of a reason to establish RTAs. In a [recent poll](#) conducted in September 2024 by Gonzales Research, 65% of Marylanders would be in



favor of allowing local jurisdictions to fund projects using local tax dollars. Maryland is ripe for this funding mechanism and we hope the Committees will agree.

For the reasons stated, we respectfully ask for a **FAVORABLE** vote on HB 916.

Thank you,

Michael Sakata
President and CEO
Maryland Transportation Builders and Materials Association

HB 916_MAA_FAV.pdf

Uploaded by: Tim Smith

Position: FAV



Delegate Ben Barnes, Chair
Appropriations Committee
120 Taylor House Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

Delegate Marc Korman, Chair
Environment and Transportation Committee
250 Taylor House Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

February 26, 2026

RE: HB 916 – FAVORABLE – Transportation – Regional Transportation Authorities

Dear Chair Barnes, Chair Korman and Members of the Committees:

The Maryland Asphalt Association (MAA) represents approximately 110+ members, including 20 material producers, contractors, engineering firms, and associate members, supporting a 7,000-person workforce. MAA actively collaborates with regulatory agencies to advocate for the asphalt industry, ensuring fair regulations at both the state and federal levels. Additionally, we support adequate funding for Maryland’s multimodal transportation system.

House Bill 916 would establish regional transportation authorities (RTAs) in three regions of Maryland—the Baltimore Region, the Capital Region, and the Southern Maryland Region to prepare and implement regional transportation plans for their respective regions and sets up the funding and taxing mechanisms for the authorities.

MAA strongly supports HB 916, as it addresses a critical need for funding regional and local transportation projects across all modes. We appreciate the sponsor’s leadership in introducing this bill—an approach we have long advocated for in Maryland. RTAs have proven highly effective in ensuring dedicated investment in transportation infrastructure. Virginia, for example, has successfully utilized RTAs for years. The Northern Virginia Transportation Authority alone provides over \$400 million annually for projects, funding improvements aligned with regional plans while allowing localities to allocate a portion of funds to their specific needs.

The potential impact for Maryland is significant. If modeled after Virginia’s success, an RTA could generate \$2.4 billion over a six-year capital budget cycle—just for one region. Like this bill proposes, Virginia operates three regional transportation authorities, demonstrating their effectiveness.

Importantly, RTAs do not replace existing funding mechanisms; rather, they supplement them, establishing dedicated funding sources to ensure steady, region-specific infrastructure investment. As you know, Maryland’s current transportation funding streams are insufficient to meet demand or sustain our transportation workforce. HB 916 offers a forward-looking solution—reducing reliance on the Motor Fuel Tax and other limited revenue sources while enabling expanded investment that would ease commutes and create tens of thousands of construction jobs.



Given Maryland's diverse landscape, an RTA framework would ensure that transportation funding is allocated where it is needed most, rather than placing the financial burden on residents who may not benefit from certain projects. This bill would provide a more equitable and targeted approach to transportation investment—benefiting communities, workers, and the state's economic growth.

For the reasons stated, we respectfully ask for a **FAVORABLE** vote on HB 916.

Sincerely,

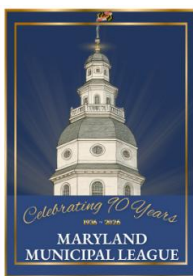
A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Tim Smith'.

Tim E. Smith, P.E.
President
Maryland Asphalt Association

HB 916 - MML - FWA.pdf

Uploaded by: Bill Jorch

Position: FWA



TESTIMONY

COMMITTEE: House Environment and Transportation

DATE: February 26, 2026

POSITION: Favorable with Amendments

BILL: HB 916

The Maryland Municipal League (MML) supports with amendment House Bill 916: Transportation - Regional Transportation Authorities. The bill establishes three regional transportation authorities and new transportation funding mechanisms. The MML amendment would allow for subsequent regional authorities to be created.

Transportation infrastructure is critical to moving people and goods in an efficient manner. However, prioritizing projects, cohesive planning, and adequate funding are challenging. Particularly in the current fiscal climate, transportation infrastructure needs are high, but funding is struggling to keep pace. Municipal governments maintain almost 10% of the lane miles in the State yet receive only 3% of highway user revenue (HUR), so the responsibility at the local level is significant and the dedicated funding mechanism is relatively low.

The framework and funding in HB 916 fundamentally alter transportation policy in a unique and potentially beneficial manner. The funding piece is particularly impactful for local governments as it would add on top of existing HUR. Even with the municipal portion of HUR returning to levels near what was provided for the decades preceding the historic HUR cuts in 2009, municipal governments still have a backlog of projects and current transportation funding gaps. The surcharges created in the bill would provide a source of additional funding for local governments to better fulfill local transportation needs.

MML represents 161 local governments from across the State and proposes an amendment to allow for the creation of subsequent regional authorities in addition to those created in the bill.

“A group of three or more counties not already a member of a regional authority created under this section may petition the General Assembly to be created as a regional authority under this section if a majority of the counties and municipalities in those counties sign the petition.”

For these reasons, the Maryland Municipal League respectfully requests a favorable report with the above amendment on House Bill 916.

For more information relating to this piece of testimony, please contact:

Justin Fiore: Director, Advocacy and Public Policy, justinf@mdmunicipal.org

Municipalities own and maintain about 10% of the State's lane miles yet receive only 3% of highway user revenues.

CE Ball 2026 - HB0916 - Transportation – Regional

Uploaded by: Brian Shepter

Position: FWA



HOWARD COUNTY OFFICE OF COUNTY EXECUTIVE

3430 Courthouse Drive ■ Ellicott City, Maryland 21043 ■ 410-313-2013 Voice/Relay

Calvin Ball
Howard County Executive
cball@howardcountymd.gov

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February 23, 2026

Delegate Korman, Chair
Environment and Transportation Committee
250 Taylor House Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Re: **Support with Amendment:** HB0916 Transportation – Regional Transportation Authorities

Dear Chair Korman, Vice Chair Guyton, and Members of the Committee,

I am pleased to write in support of House Bill 0916, and I commend Delegates Spiegel, Behler, Crutchfield, Fair, Kaiser, Kaufman, Patterson and Wu for sponsoring this legislation. A Baltimore Regional Transportation Authority would strengthen regional public transportation services for our residents and businesses. HB0916 calls for the establishment of Regional Transportation Authorities in the Baltimore, Capital, and Southern Maryland regions, enabling these authorities to plan, allocate funding, and oversee transportation projects. Additionally, this proposed legislation would implement several new revenue streams to fund the authorities.

As a member of the Baltimore Regional Transportation Board, I am aware of the important work the Baltimore Regional Transit Commission is doing to support the growth and sustainability of the regional transit system. This includes identifying models for funding and governance reform that will enhance public transportation and identify potential funding sources. We know that the transportation needs for our region are great, and future economic growth hinges on strong transportation investments that create jobs, connect our workforce, and spur economic development opportunities. In Howard County, we have continued to invest in local bus service through the Regional Transportation Agency of Central Maryland, recently initiating new connections to Baltimore County while striving to enhance existing service. Despite these improvements, Howard County and other jurisdictions in the Baltimore region have a great need for better regional connectivity.

This legislation is a strong starting point for advancing regional public transportation connections and access in the Baltimore region. Developing the framework for a regional transportation authority should be the first step in this process, as it will allow the authorities to create planning and organizational structures best suited to advancing public transportation. This includes developing an authority structure that is flexible and responsive to the rapidly shifting funding landscape at the local, state, and federal levels.

In the current fiscal climate, I am concerned about this bill's broad mandate to implement new taxes and fees, which may not be fully aligned with the State and local governments' efforts to balance budgets and the inflationary challenges faced by our constituents.



HOWARD COUNTY OFFICE OF COUNTY EXECUTIVE

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As the Maryland General Assembly considers a path forward for regional transportation planning, I encourage the General Assembly to consider a phased approach to establishing regional transportation authorities, first focusing on establishing the structure and governance model needed to create a successful authority.

An amendment to replace the mandatory revenue enhancements with a requirement for the newly established authorities to develop a revenue plan for consideration by the General Assembly would strengthen this legislation. HB0916 is an important first step in implementing and advancing regional transit projects, but this path is best approached with structure and a deliberate strategy to ensure success.

Thank you for your consideration of this testimony and for your continued service to the State of Maryland.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Calvin Ball', is written over a light blue horizontal line.

Calvin Ball
Howard County Executive

HB916-VAAAC Transportation - Regional Transportati

Uploaded by: Kristen Pironis

Position: FWA



Testimony on House Bill 916 – Favorable with Amendments
Transportation - Regional Transportation Authorities

To: Delegate Marc Korman
Chair, Environment & Transportation Committee

CC: Delegate Ben Barnes
Chair, Appropriations Committee

Testimony from: Kristen Pironis
Chief Executive Officer, Visit Annapolis & Anne Arundel County
26 West Street
Annapolis, MD 21401
410-280-0445 / kp@visitannapolis.org

Date: February 24, 2026

Dear Chair Korman and Members of the Environment & Transportation Committee and Chair Barnes and Members of the Appropriations Committee:

On behalf of Visit Annapolis & Anne Arundel County, I am writing to express our general support for House Bill 916, with a request for an amendment to ensure a more equitable and sustainable approach to transportation funding.

Annapolis and Anne Arundel County are key drivers of Maryland's tourism economy. In 2024, Maryland welcomed 45.8 million visitors who spent \$21.2 billion, with Anne Arundel County accounting for 20 percent of this total—more than 7.2 million visitors contributing \$4.3 billion and supporting 19,000 local jobs. While we recognize the critical role of transportation infrastructure for the tourism industry, especially in our fly-and-drive markets, we are concerned that funding this infrastructure primarily through hotel taxes would place a disproportionate burden on an already heavily taxed sector.

Research shows that leisure travelers are highly sensitive to price increases, including hotel taxes. Studies indicate that many visitors reduce their stay to offset higher taxes, which ultimately impacts their spending on local businesses such as restaurants, entertainment, and retail. Additionally, for large groups and those planning meetings, conventions, and conferences, hotel taxes play a significant role in site selection. Higher taxes could cause hotels to lower their room rates to remain competitive, which ultimately reduces the revenue from the hotel tax and undermines the intended funding for transportation improvements.

To illustrate this point, in 2015, Georgia introduced a \$5 per room night hotel tax to fund transportation. This resulted in a loss of 92,000 room nights per month. Despite efforts to repeal or reduce the surcharge, Georgia continues to face challenges with one of the highest hotel tax rates in the country in cities like Columbus, Decatur, and Macon.

The proposed hotel surcharge in HB 916 would increase the cost of hotel rooms in Maryland, making the state less competitive compared to neighboring states with lower taxes or no additional fees. To ensure Maryland remains an attractive destination for visitors, it is crucial that transportation funding comes from a broader base that reflects the diverse sectors benefiting from improved infrastructure.

Locally, when hotel taxes are decided by stakeholders who understand price sensitivity, market trends, and specific regional needs, the funds can be reinvested directly into tourism and hospitality. This reinvestment not only drives additional economic impact but also enhances the visitor experience and improves the quality of life for residents.

We believe the proposed hotel surcharge in HB 916 would unduly burden the tourism industry that is only now recovering to pre-pandemic levels and will have long-lasting negative effects on Maryland's economy. On behalf of our hotel and lodging partners, we respectfully request that the proposed hotel surcharge be removed from the bill, ensuring that transportation funding is more broadly shared across all sectors that benefit from infrastructure improvements.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Kristen Pironis
Chief Executive Officer
Visit Annapolis & Anne Arundel County

ACECMD - 2026 Testimony - FWA - HB916 - Transporta

Uploaded by: Rory Murray

Position: FWA



Hon. Marc Korman
House Environment and Transportation Committee

Re: HB916 - Transportation - Regional Transportation Authorities
POSITION: FAVORABLE WITH AMENDMENTS

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

ACEC/MD represents Maryland's private-sector engineering firms that design and deliver the transportation, water, environmental, and public works infrastructure that local governments and the State rely upon every day. Our members are deeply invested in stable, predictable transportation funding because it drives capital planning, project readiness, and delivery performance and economic growth across Maryland.

We appreciate the opportunity to provide testimony on House Bill 916, which establishes the Baltimore Region, Capital Region, and Southern Maryland Region Transportation Authorities. We support the bill's fundamental goal of creating dedicated regional transportation planning and funding mechanisms to address Maryland's significant transportation infrastructure needs. However, we respectfully recommend amendments to ensure the proposed Regional Transportation Authorities (RTAs) align with existing federal planning structures, and preserve federal transportation funding.

Support for the Bill's Core Objectives

House Bill 916 addresses critical transportation infrastructure challenges through:

- Establishing dedicated regional authorities with governance structures to plan and implement transportation projects that maximize movement of people and promote efficiency, safety, and environmental and social justice impacts;
- Creating stable, predictable funding streams through the Baltimore Region, Capital Region, and Southern Maryland Region Transportation Funds;
- Requiring at least 30% of each regional fund to support transit projects, ensuring multimodal investment; and
- Empowering regions to develop long-range transportation plans and prioritize regional projects for state and federal funding

These provisions recognize that effective transportation planning requires regional coordination, dedicated resources, and local input into priority-setting. The establishment of special, nonlapsing funds provides fiscal stability that can leverage additional public and private investment.

Recommended Amendments

While we support the bill's objectives, we recommend two critical amendments to ensure successful implementation and protect Maryland's interests:



AMERICAN COUNCIL OF ENGINEERING COMPANIES/MARYLAND

Amendment 1: Align RTA Boundaries with Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) Boundaries

Issue: The bill establishes three regional transportation authorities but does not explicitly align their geographic boundaries with existing Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) designated under federal law (23 U.S.C. § 134 and 49 U.S.C. § 5303).

Federal Context: Federal transportation law requires MPOs to conduct transportation planning in urbanized areas with populations over 50,000. Maryland's existing MPOs include the Baltimore Regional Transportation Board (BRTB), Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments/National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board (COG/TPB), and the Salisbury-Wicomico MPO. These bodies are responsible for developing Transportation Improvement Programs (TIPs) and long-range Metropolitan Transportation Plans (MTPs) that are prerequisites for federal funding eligibility.

Risk: Misalignment between RTA boundaries and MPO boundaries could create:

- Conflicting transportation plans and priorities between RTAs and federally-designated MPOs;
- Confusion over which entity has planning authority for federal funding purposes;
- Duplication of planning efforts and administrative costs; and
- Potential federal concerns about state compliance with metropolitan planning requirements

Amendment 2: Protect Federal Transportation Funding Eligibility

Issue: The bill creates new regional authorities with significant planning and project selection powers but does not explicitly address the relationship between RTA activities and federal funding eligibility requirements.

Federal Funding Context: Maryland receives substantial federal transportation funding through programs including:

Federal funding eligibility depends on compliance with federal planning requirements, including metropolitan transportation plans developed by MPOs, statewide transportation plans, and consistency with air quality conformity determinations under the Clean Air Act.

Risk: Without explicit safeguards, RTA activities could:

- Overlap or conflict with existing MPO planning responsibilities, undermining federally required regional transportation plans.
- Impose overlapping or excessive local surcharges that dampen private investment and job growth in key employment centers.
- Divert or restructure revenues in a way that violates federal matching, maintenance-of-effort, or eligibility requirements, putting formula and discretionary funds at risk.



AMERICAN COUNCIL OF ENGINEERING COMPANIES/MARYLAND

Conclusion

House Bill 916 represents an important step toward addressing Maryland's transportation infrastructure needs through regional planning and dedicated funding. These amendments strengthen the bill without undermining its core objectives. They provide necessary guardrails to ensure that regional transportation planning enhances, rather than conflicts with, existing federal frameworks and protects Maryland's fiscal and economic interests.

We urge the Committee to adopt these amendments and report **House Bill 916 favorably as amended.**

Thank you for your consideration. We are available to discuss these recommendations and work with the Committee on amendment language.

Respectfully,

Maria K. Donovan

Maria Donovan
Executive Director
ACEC/MD

HB916_UNF_MHLA_Rohrer.pdf

Uploaded by: Amy Rohrer

Position: UNF

HB 916 - Transportation - Regional Transportation Authorities
Environment and Transportation Committee
February 26, 2026
Position: UNFAVORABLE

*MHLA is the sole statewide organization dedicated to advocacy on behalf of Maryland's lodging industry. Our industry is a powerful economic engine - **765 hotels** support more than **115,000 jobs** statewide, generate **\$7.2 billion in wages and salaries**, contribute **\$2.4 billion in state and local tax revenue**, and drive **\$10.6 billion in guest spending** that strengthens communities across Maryland.*

The Maryland Hotel Lodging Association **strongly opposes HB 916 unless the proposed 1% Transportation Authority Hotel Surcharge is removed.**

This bill would raise taxes on Maryland hotels in the **Baltimore Region** (Anne Arundel, Baltimore and Howard Counties + Baltimore City), **Capital Region** (Frederick, Montgomery and Prince George's Counties) and **Southern Maryland Region** (Calvert, Charles and St. Mary's Counties) at the exact moment the industry is still struggling to recover. It increases the cost of staying in Maryland, weakens our competitive position, and risks reducing the very travel activity that generates transportation and tax revenue in the first place.

If the goal is long-term revenue stability, this policy moves the state in the wrong direction.

Maryland's Hotel Industry Is Not Recovered

Maryland hotels remain below pre-pandemic demand levels and underperforming national averages.

Between 2024 and 2025:

- Occupancy and rooms sold declined.
- RevPAR fell **-1.9% statewide**.
- Impacted jurisdictions declined even more sharply at **-2.3%**.

The statewide RevPAR decline represents:

- **\$85.6 million in lost room revenue**
- **\$5.1 million in unrealized state sales tax**
- **\$200.2 million in lost guest spending**

More than two-thirds of Maryland's hotel rooms are located in the jurisdictions targeted by HB 916, and those markets are already under greater strain than the rest of the state collectively.

Maryland hotels are serving fewer guests than in 2019. Occupancy remains 3.3 percentage points lower. Room-night demand is down 5.7%. Employment has not fully recovered.

This is not a fully stabilized industry. It is a demand-sensitive industry in a soft recovery.

This Tax Targets Price-Sensitive Demand

Hotel taxes are largely, but not entirely, paid by visitors. That makes them politically easy, but economically risky.

Leisure travelers, meetings, conventions, and group business are highly price-sensitive. Under HB 916, the total hotel tax in Baltimore City and National Harbor would rise to 18.5-19%, putting the tax rate for two of Maryland's convention destinations among the highest in the country. At a time when demand is already soft, this sends the wrong market signal.

Travelers and convention planners compare destinations line by line. **When Maryland becomes materially more expensive than competitors, business goes elsewhere.**

The State Is Raising Costs While Cutting Promotion

The policy contradiction is clear.

Maryland recently reduced tourism marketing funding - one of the primary drivers of visitation - while simultaneously proposing to increase lodging taxes.

You cannot reduce demand generation and raise travel costs at the same time and expect growth.

Tourism promotion increases room nights. Room nights generate hotel tax revenue. Hotel tax revenue supports transportation and local services.

HB 916 diverts tourism-generated revenue away from industry recovery with no reinvestment mechanism to rebuild demand.

That is not a growth strategy. It is a contraction risk.

Transportation Funding Should Not Undermine Travel Activity

Hotels do not oppose transportation investment. In fact, our industry depends on strong infrastructure.

But transportation funding should be built on growing economic activity - not suppressing it.

Every lost room night means:

- Lost hotel tax
- Lost sales tax
- Lost restaurant revenue
- Lost transportation usage
- Lost jobs

The fastest way to grow transportation revenue is to restore travel demand and expand the tax base - not increase the cost of entry during a fragile recovery.

The Bottom Line

Maryland's hotel industry:

- Is still below 2019 demand levels.
- Underperformed national benchmarks in 2025.
- Is concentrated in the very jurisdictions this bill would target.

HB 916 increases costs in struggling markets, reduces competitiveness, and risks further demand erosion.

That is not prudent fiscal policy.

For these reasons, the Maryland Hotel Lodging Association respectfully urges the Committee to **reject HB 916 as drafted** or **amend the bill to remove the proposed 1% Transportation Authority Hotel Surcharge**.

For more information, please contact:

Amy Rohrer, President & CEO
Maryland Hotel Lodging Association
amy@MDLodging.org

HB 916 - Regional Transportation Authorities - UNF

Uploaded by: Christa McGee

Position: UNF



House Bill 916 - Transportation - Regional Transportation Authorities

Position: Oppose

On behalf of our member organizations the Greater Capitol Area Association of REALTORS® (GCAAR), the Prince George's County Association of REALTORS® (PGCAR), the Greater Baltimore Board of REALTORS® (GBBR), and Southern Maryland Association of REALTORS® (SMAR), we respectfully oppose HB 916.

While REALTORS® recognize the importance of investing in transportation infrastructure, Maryland residents overwhelmingly cite housing affordability, cost of living, and tax burdens as their top concerns. Recent polling shows that housing costs top constituent priorities, with a vast majority of voters identifying affordability as a major issue, and many Marylanders expressing concern over rising prices and taxes statewide. In that same survey, only 5% of Maryland voters cited transportation as their top concern.

HB 916 would impose a new regional transportation transfer tax surcharge across multiple regions of the State — ultimately increasing the tax burden on Maryland families, small businesses, and homebuyers at a time when residents are already stretched thin by high housing costs and other living expenses. Rather than exacerbating cost pressures, the State should be focused on reducing barriers to homeownership and preserving economic opportunity.

We also note that when nearby Virginia enacted similar regional transportation funding measures in certain jurisdictions, those proposals were the product of years of engagement with the business community and the impacted industries, with stakeholders willingly agreeing to tax themselves to support agreed-upon infrastructure goals. In contrast, HB 916's sweeping tax surcharges lack that same broad, collaborative foundation.

Given the outside impact of new tax burdens on the issues Marylanders rank as most pressing — housing affordability, cost of living, and taxes — Maryland REALTORS® respectfully requests an unfavorable report on House Bill 916.

**For more information contact lisa.may@mdrealtor.org
or christa.mcgee@mdrealtor.org**

HB0916_Unfavorable_CMTA.pdf

Uploaded by: Eric Norton

Position: UNF



Transportation Alliance

February 26, 2026

Testimony on HB 916 – *Transportation - Regional Transportation Authorities –* Environment & Transportation Committee

Position: Unfavorable

The Central Maryland Transportation Alliance respectfully opposes HB 916, which would create three new regional transportation authorities across the state charged with funding and implementing transportation projects in their respective geographies. While the Transportation Alliance has been supportive of raising revenue for transportation projects and has advocated for an independent regional transportation or transit agency in Baltimore, we don't believe HB 916 offers the best path to get there.

For years leaders in the Greater Baltimore region have been seeking to reform the way its local public transportation is governed and financed. Structural challenges in the current centralized governance structure of the Maryland Transit Administration (MTA) make maintaining and improving transit performance difficult. The result is an unreliable public transportation system that further disadvantages many users already negatively impacted by poverty and structural racism, discourages ridership growth, and puts the region at a competitive disadvantage compared to other metropolitan areas with robust, reliable public transit.

Moreover, the lack of local participation in planning and funding decisions has been a contributing factor to ongoing maintenance problems and lack of significant expansion or improvement. Of the 50 largest transit agencies in the country, the MTA is the only one that is part of a state department of transportation without a board of directors and where decision-making lies solely with a governor. In recent years the General Assembly has taken a step toward reform through legislation that established a Baltimore Regional Transit Commission (BRTC). The BRTC has been a huge improvement in terms of having an official body that is providing some measure of transparency to MTA's operations, plans and budget. However, it is largely an advisory body that lacks the full power of a regional transportation authority.

The General Assembly is now considering bills such as HB 1081 that seek further changes to the BRTC and MTA's governance structure. We support some, but not all of those changes. The core of the problem is a mismatch between who runs our local transit system and who relies on it. HB 916 does not address this mismatch and would leave the current governance model in place.



Transportation Alliance

Additionally, language in the bill talks about the purpose of the authorities is maximizing the movement of people, as well as promoting efficiency, safety, environmental impacts and social justice. However, the bill calls for transportation projects to be evaluated by one metric above all others: their ability to “reduce congestion”. This sounds like a neutral and common-sense way to evaluate transportation projects, but it too often leads us to focus on the mobility of free-flowing car traffic as the end-all, be-all of transportation goals. Forward-thinking transportation planning should prioritize goals like access (the ability to reach destinations) over vehicle throughput (the ability to move quickly).

We encourage an UNFAVORABLE report for House Bill 916.

MBIA Letter of Oppositon HB916 (1).pdf

Uploaded by: Lori Graf

Position: UNF

February 2nd, 2026

The Honorable Marc Korman
Chair, House Environment and Transportation Committee
250 Taylor House Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

RE: MBIA Letter of Opposition HB 916 - Transportation - Regional Transportation Authorities

Dear Chair Korman,

The Maryland Building Industry Association, representing 100,000 employees of the building industry across the State of Maryland, appreciates the opportunity to participate in the discussion surrounding HB916. We submit testimony in opposition to this legislation establishing new regional transportation authorities in the Baltimore region, capital region, and Southern Maryland region, along with dedicated special funds and new sales, hotel, and transfer tax surcharges.

While regional transportation planning is an important objective, this bill creates significant structural and fiscal concerns.

First, the creation of three new regional transportation authority's introduces another layer of government with taxing authority. These entities would operate alongside existing State and local transportation agencies, potentially duplicating functions already performed by the Maryland Department of Transportation and county governments. Fragmenting oversight may lead to inefficiencies, overlapping responsibilities, and unclear lines of accountability.

Second, the establishment of special, nonlapsing transportation funds reduces legislative flexibility and long-term budget oversight. Dedicating revenue streams outside of the normal appropriations process can limit transparency and diminish the General Assembly's ability to respond to shifting fiscal priorities.

Third, the imposition of new regional sales tax surcharges, hotel surcharges, and transfer tax surcharges raises affordability and competitiveness concerns. Layering additional taxes onto consumers, property transactions, and the hospitality sector could:

- Increase the cost of living and doing business
- Discourage tourism and investment
- Place disproportionate burdens on residents in already high-cost regions

In particular, transfer tax surcharges may further strain the housing market by increasing transaction costs at a time when affordability remains a significant challenge.

Transportation infrastructure is vital to economic growth and quality of life, but solutions should prioritize fiscal responsibility, transparency, and coordination within existing governance structures rather than creating new taxing authorities.

For these reasons, we respectfully urge the Committee to issue an unfavorable report.

For more information about this position, please contact Lori Graf at 410-800-7327 or lgraf@marylandbuilders.org.

cc: Members of the House Environment and Transportation Committee

HB0916 - MTC Testimony.pdf

Uploaded by: Matt Libber

Position: UNF



February 24, 2026

The Honorable Marc Korman
Environment and Transportation Committee
251 Taylor House Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

RE: Opposition to HB 916 – Transportation – Regional Transportation Authorities

Chair Korman and Members of the Committee:

My name is Matt Libber, and I serve as Legislative Committee Chair for the Maryland Tourism Coalition (MTC). On behalf of our members, I respectfully submit this testimony in opposition to House Bill 916 – Transportation – Regional Transportation Authorities.

While we recognize and appreciate the importance of strengthening regional transportation infrastructure, this legislation raises serious concerns for Maryland’s tourism industry—one of the state’s key economic drivers.

First, the proposed increase in hotel taxes—characterized in the bill as a surcharge—would function as a tax increase on visitors. Higher accommodation costs risk discouraging overnight stays and reducing visitor spending at local restaurants, attractions, entertainment venues, and retail establishments. This impact would be particularly harmful to smaller and rural communities that rely heavily on tourism revenue to sustain local businesses and jobs.

Historically, hotel tax revenues have supported tourism marketing initiatives and directly benefited the jurisdictions in which they are collected. Diverting these funds for other purposes sets a concerning precedent and creates the potential for further reallocation in the future. At the state level, tourism marketing funding has remained essentially flat for nearly a decade, while Maryland’s neighboring states continue to increase their investments. Tourism is an intensely competitive industry, and Maryland is already losing ground due to underinvestment. The tourism industry strongly opposes any increase in the hotel tax that does not reinvest new revenue directly into tourism promotion and marketing.

Second, the legislation risks creating a fragmented and inconsistent sales tax structure across regions. A patchwork system could create confusion for visitors and negatively affect their overall experience. A seamless and predictable tax environment encourages travel across Maryland’s diverse destinations—from the Eastern Shore and historic Annapolis to Baltimore’s Inner Harbor and Western Maryland’s scenic attractions. Consistency in policy supports exploration and strengthens the state’s overall tourism brand.

We respectfully urge the Committee to reconsider advancing this legislation and instead pursue solutions that enhance transportation infrastructure without undermining Maryland’s tourism economy. Our



**MARYLAND
TOURISM
COALITION**

industry stands ready to collaborate on strategies that improve mobility while supporting economic growth for residents and visitors alike.

Thank you for your time and consideration. We respectfully request an unfavorable report on House Bill 916.

Respectfully submitted,

Matt Libber
Legislative Chair
Maryland Tourism Coalition

OPPOSE - HB916 - MDMO.pdf

Uploaded by: Michael Mason

Position: UNF



February 26, 2026

The Honorable Marc Korman, Chair
House Environment & Transportation Committee

Re: House Bill 916 - Transportation - Regional Transportation Authorities

Position: *Oppose*

Chair Korman and Committee Members:

On behalf of the Maryland Association of Destination Marketing Organizations (MDMO), I am writing to express our ***opposition*** for House Bill 916 – Transportation – Regional Transportation Authorities. House Bill 916 would create three new regional transportation authorities and funds for the Baltimore Region, Capital Region, and Southern Maryland Region, financed in part by new “transportation authority” sales tax surcharges, hotel surcharges, and transfer-tax surcharges dedicated to transportation. While we recognize the importance of reliable, well-funded transportation systems, MDMO strongly believes that tourism-based taxes—particularly hotel and related surcharges—are not the appropriate funding source for core transportation infrastructure.

Destination marketing organizations already operate in a highly competitive regional environment where hotel taxes and fees are a key component of price-sensitive travel decisions. Every incremental percentage of tax layered onto a room rate makes Maryland’s destinations less competitive compared to neighboring states and regions. When those added costs go to a broad transportation pot rather than back into tourism promotion and experience, we risk undermining the industry. Maryland visitors already pay into Maryland’s transportation and general funds through the existing 6% State sales and use tax on food and beverage, retail purchases, fuel, and other taxable services.

For these reasons, the Maryland Association of Destination Marketing Organizations respectfully urges an **unfavorable** report on HB 916. Transportation is a core public responsibility that should be funded from broad, transportation-linked revenue sources—not by turning tourism and hotel guests into a dedicated, long-term subsidy for regional transportation authorities.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Cassandra M. Vanhooser". The signature is written in a cursive style and is enclosed within a blue circular stamp.

Cassandra Vanhooser, Chairman
Maryland Association of Destination Marketing Organizations

MGA 2026 Testimony Bill HB0916 (Regional Transport

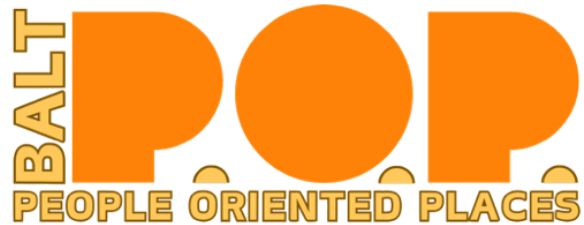
Uploaded by: Michael Scepaniak

Position: UNF

Bill: HB0916

Bill Title: Transportation — Regional
Transportation Authorities

Position: **Unfavorable**



Members of the House Environment and Transportation Committee,

As a group which views public transit as being a preferred mode of transportation for maximizing the appeal and productivity of Baltimore and its closest-in suburbs, we oppose HB0916.

Baltimore's transit has long struggled with a fundamental governance mismatch: those affected by transportation policy are not the ones who have decisionmaking power. Decisions regarding Baltimore regional transportation are made by a state level agency, the Maryland Department of Transportation. As a result, *all* Maryland residents — whether or not they live in the Baltimore region — have a voice on the future direction of transportation in the Baltimore area.

Baltimore's situation is exceptional, in a negative way. In other metropolitan areas, this problem has been solved by creating a regional transportation authority, a regional body that has planning and funding powers for transportation across the entire metropolitan area. Among the fifty largest transit agencies in the United States, the Maryland Transit Administration is the *only one* that does not operate under a regional transportation authority [1]. Because of this, Baltimore's transportation network is not accountable to the residents of the Baltimore region, with potentially catastrophic results. This was demonstrated persuasively in 2015, when Governor Larry Hogan unilaterally cancelled the Baltimore Red Line transit project. The Maryland legislature has a duty to ensure that a similar disregard for the voices of the Baltimore region cannot be repeated in the future.

Unfortunately, the solution that HB916 provides to this governance problem is deeply flawed. The bill would multiply the amount of bureaucracy needed to administer transportation funding across the state. It would require a time-consuming overhaul of the Maryland Department of Transportation, likely forcing the government into an arduous process to re-negotiate labor contracts. Most importantly, HB0916 would likely encourage further road widening and road expansion throughout the Baltimore area.

Indeed, the bill's sponsors seem to have anticipated this danger by explicitly denoting that 30% of the fund in each transportation authority should be used for transit projects. Instead of revitalizing transit in the Baltimore region and improving transit governance across Maryland, the bill will supercharge road projects, perpetuating the historic gap between funding for road infrastructure and alternative transportation - and increasing our future maintenance backlog.

In this legislative session, we have received two potential answers to Baltimore's transit governance deficit: HB0916 and HB1081. HB1081 is the product of the Baltimore Regional Transit Commission, a workgroup created specifically to study solutions for transportation governance in Baltimore. While the Core Service Board suggested by HB1081 would not create a true regional transportation authority, it represents a practical step towards regional control that avoids unnecessary bureaucratic disruption.

Developing an independent regional authority should remain a goal of the legislature. HB1081, unlike HB0916, moves us toward this goal without repeating the investment mistakes of the past.

We hope the committee finds these points helpful and convincing and we urge its members to **vote against HB0916**. Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this legislation.

[BaltPOP - Baltimoreans for People-Oriented Places](#)

[1] Eno Center for Transportation, *Transit Reform for Maryland: New Models for Accountability, Stability, and Equity* (November 2020), p. 2.

HB916.pdf

Uploaded by: Randy Guy

Position: UNF

ST. MARY'S COUNTY GOVERNMENT
COMMISSIONERS OF
ST. MARY'S COUNTY



James R. Guy, President
Michael R. Alderson, Jr., Commissioner
Eric S. Colvin, Commissioner
Michael L. Hewitt, Commissioner
Scott R. Ostrow, Commissioner

HB 916
Transportation – Regional Transportation Authorities

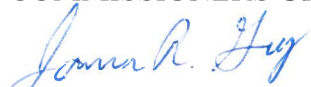
COMMITTEE: Environment and Transportation, Appropriations
POSITION: Oppose

The Commissioners of St. Mary's County **OPPOSE HB 916 – Transportation - Regional Transportation Authorities**. This legislation creates several regional transportation authorities, including a Southern Maryland Region Transportation Authority. The particular model for transportation planning proposed by this legislation raises concerns about governance, the relationship between any future regional transportation authorities and existing metropolitan planning organizations, and fiscal accountability.

Local governments own an overwhelming majority of Maryland's roadways, but local governments' representation in the proposed Southern Maryland Region authority's governing body is significantly diluted. Many of the proposed functions and responsibilities of the proposed regional transportation authorities appear duplicative of functions served by existing metropolitan planning organizations. While regional collaboration is essential to meeting cross-county transportation needs, abandoning existing collaborative tools that ensure counties have a fair place at the table is not conducive to improving local and regional outcomes.

We respectfully request the committee report **UNFAVORABLE** on HB 916. Thank you for your consideration of this matter, and thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimony.

Sincerely,
COMMISSIONERS OF ST. MARY'S COUNTY


James Randy Guy, President

CSMC/AB/tr
T:/Consent/2026/022

Cc: Senator Jack Bailey
Delegate Matthew Morgan
Delegate Brian Crosby
Commissioner Mike Alderson, Jr.
Commissioner Eric Colvin
Commissioner Michael Hewitt
Commissioner Scott R. Ostrow
David Weiskopf, County Administrator

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David Yingling, Deputy County Administrator
Buffy Giddens, County Attorney
John Sterling Houser, Deputy County Attorney

CSG testimony HB916 Reg Transp Authorities bill 20

Uploaded by: Stewart Schwartz

Position: UNF

**Testimony on HB 916
Transportation – Regional Transportation Authorities
House Environment & Transportation Committee**

Date: February 24, 2026

Position: UNFAVORABLE

The Coalition for Smarter Growth opposes the proposed **Regional Transportation Authorities**. Our organization advocates for walkable, bikeable, inclusive, and transit-oriented communities as the most sustainable and equitable way for the Washington, DC region to grow and provide opportunities for all. We have worked extensively in the Maryland suburbs of DC, in particular in Prince George's and Montgomery counties, and have supported numerous transit, safe streets, and arterial road investments as well as land use and housing solutions that provide transportation benefits.

Regional Transportation Authorities HB 916 would increase taxes via three new taxing and planning authorities for transportation in portions of the state. **HB916 structures the proposed funding authorities similar to ones in Virginia that have been problematic and led to calls for reform by some officials and stakeholders.** The Coalition for Smarter Growth has the following concerns from our experience working in Virginia:

The Authorities would lock in tax revenue sources that once bonded cannot be repurposed by the General Assembly for other needs. Once the General Assembly gives up these tax streams to the regional authorities and the tax streams are locked into debt service for project bonds, the legislature is unlikely to be able to reclaim these tax revenue streams for other state needs like education, water/sewer infrastructure, or other transportation needs.

HB916 would create long-term maintenance costs that will be passed onto the entire state. Although the bill does not exclude state-of-good repair for use of funds, there is no requirement to include, much less prioritize, maintenance. The proposed authorities include no responsibility to fund long-term maintenance of the new infrastructure they build, leading to future maintenance costs that the state will have to pick up.

Risk that the revenues become a “slush fund” supporting poor land use decisions. In practice in Virginia, the increased funding has removed the incentive of local governments to improve land use planning to reduce driving demand and expensive road widening.

The HB916 “congestion reduction” metric is a false promise, because of induced demand. Three are better metrics like proximity and accessibility, demand reduction approaches, safety, and environmental sustainability.

Creates yet another expensive bureaucracy. The regional authorities mean another bureaucracy that is redundant to MDOT/MTA, Metropolitan Planning Organizations, and local

governments and transportation staff. The legal, financial and planning requirements are such that it leads to hiring more and more staff, and more and more meetings on top of those already burdening local and state officials. The Northern Virginia Transportation Authority now has over a \$5M annual operating budget, 20 staff, and several committees taking up officials' time.

Maryland communities need better land use, not throwing more money at the problem. Walkable, mixed-use, transit-oriented land use is the most effective long-term solution. Each person who can live and/or work in a walkable, transit-accessible community or Main Street neighborhood helps to reduce driving demand. We believe that local jurisdictions and MDOT have better options for jointly addressing transportation needs.

We respectfully ask for an **Unfavorable report for HB 916** by the committee. Thank you.

Stewart Schwartz, Executive Director

Local 1300 Position Statement on Regional Transpor

Uploaded by: Brian Wivell

Position: INFO

Amalgamated Transit Union Local 1300

126 W. 25th Street, Baltimore, Maryland 21218
Telephone: 410-889-3566 Facsimile: 410-243-5541
www.atu1300.org

Proudly representing the transit workers of the MTA!



2026 Legislative Position on All Regional Transportation Authority Bills Update to Our 2025 Position Statement

HB 916 - Transportation - Regional Transportation Authorities
SB 674 - Transportation - Regional Transportation Authorities

INFORMATIONAL

February 26, 2026

ATU Local 1300 represents over 3,000 transit workers at the Maryland Transit Administration (MTA). This includes bus operators, bus mechanics, rail operators, rail maintenance workers, and more. Our members keep Maryland moving every day.

ATU Local 1300 strongly supports efforts at finding additional revenue that could help support the transportation operations and infrastructure of Maryland. It is an urgent need that can not be ignored. With that in mind, we applaud the multiple bills introduced in 2026 that seek to expand the taxing authority of different regions to fund additional transportation projects and services. Unfortunately, we have concerns that pursuing these approaches may pit regional transit systems against each other and undermine the collective bargaining power of existing or future transit workers. We hope to explain some of those concerns below.

Are These Regional Transportation Authorities Operators or Funders?

2026's legislation appears to emphasize that these entities are for financing the construction of transit projects and advice, but we have concerns with the broad language around entering into contracts or creating and being members of corporations that could leave the door open for these transportation authorities to one day become transit operators themselves. For example, 10.5-206 (A)(9) states that the authority may, "fix and collect rates, rentals, fees, royalties, and charges for services and resources it provides or makes available." This may be bog standard authority language, but it leaves open possibilities we are concerned about.

The nation's capital region had a fully unified bus system in 1972, just fifty years later there are more than a dozen transit operators working and often competing with each other in the same region. We must oppose any possibility that these transportation authorities could be new entities that actually operate and maintain or contract with entities to operate and maintain transit service until there has been enough time to understand the long term consequences of this approach.

We believe that a simple fix to this problem is to explicitly add language barring the transportation authorities from operating or maintaining transportation service, or entering into contracts to do the same. In short, we believe that Maryland suffers from a lack of frequent and reliable transit service, not from a shortage of independent transit operations authorities.

Are the Workers at these Authorities Able to Unionize?

As it is written, these transportation authorities are bodies politic and corporate and are instrumentalities of the state. Yet, because they were not named in the state's Public Employees Relations Act (PERA) of 2023 and are excluded from the National Labor Relations Act, these workers employed by these Authorities would have no rights to unionize. Maryland already has too many workers excluded from these basic rights. We encourage you to correct this oversight, by applying the PERA article to them as well.

How Does This Interact with Section 13C Urban Mass Transportation Act Protections?

13C Overview from the Federal Department of Labor:

“When federal funds are used to acquire, improve, or operate a mass transit system (public transportation), federal law requires arrangements to protect the interests of mass transit employees. 49 U.S.C. § 5333(b) (formerly Section 13(c) of the Urban Mass Transportation Act). Section 5333(b) specifies that these protective arrangements must provide for the preservation of rights and benefits of employees under existing collective bargaining agreements, the continuation of collective bargaining rights, the protection of individual employees against a worsening of their positions in relation to their employment, assurances of employment to employees of acquired transit systems, priority of reemployment, and paid training or retraining programs. 49 U.S.C. § 5333(b)(2). The Department of Labor (DOL) must certify that protective arrangements are in place and meet the above requirements for all grants of assistance under of the Federal Transit Law before the Department of Transportation's Federal Transit Administration (FTA) can release funds.”

If these new transportation authorities are created how would it impact the existing transit workforces protected by these Federally mandated arrangements?

Why Does It Explicitly Allow for Recommending Public Private Partnerships?

The broad powers granted to these authorities by “(10) CREATE, OWN, CONTROL, OR BE A MEMBER OF A CORPORATION, LIMITED LIABILITY COMPANY, PARTNERSHIP, OR OTHER ENTITY, WHETHER OPERATED FOR PROFIT OR NOT FOR PROFIT;” seems to permit public-private partnerships for project delivery without requiring state oversight. After Maryland's disastrous experience with the Purple Line construction and delivery, it seems absurd to enshrine this type of approach in law.

How Would Other State Entities Interact with these New Bodies?

What happens to the potential new Baltimore Core Services Board of the Maryland Transit Administration? What happens to the Washington Suburban Transit Commission? Who is responsible for MARC transportation projects when it spans multiple regional transportation authorities? As the bill is currently written, I don't have answers.

Conclusion

Thank you for your patience and understanding. We cannot emphasize enough how important the revenues that these entities could raise are to the future of transportation in Maryland. Unfortunately, before we could support such a proposal we need firm answers to our concerns.

HB 916_MDCC_Transportation-Regional Transportation

Uploaded by: Hannah Allen

Position: INFO



House Bill 916

Date: February 26, 2026

Committee: House Environment & Transportation

Position: Information

Founded in 1968, the Maryland Chamber of Commerce (the Chamber) is the leading voice for business in Maryland. We are a statewide coalition of more than 7,000 members and federated partners, and we work to develop and promote strong public policy that ensures sustained economic growth for Maryland businesses, employees, and families.

House Bill 916 (HB 916) would establish three regional transportation authorities, covering the Baltimore Region, Capital Region, and Southern Maryland, to coordinate transportation planning, project development, and investment across multiple jurisdictions. The bill creates dedicated regional transportation funds for each authority and authorizes new revenue sources, including sales, hotel, and property transfer tax surcharges, to support transportation projects and related bonding authority.

We appreciate the sponsor's efforts to advance more coordinated, regional approaches to transportation planning and investment. Transportation systems do not stop at jurisdictional boundaries, and improved regional coordination has the potential to enhance mobility, support economic growth, and improve access to jobs and services for Maryland residents and employers.

We are particularly encouraged by the bill's recognition that long-term transportation challenges, such as congestion, freight movement, workforce access, and infrastructure modernization, require collaborative solutions that align state, regional, and local priorities. A well-designed regional framework can help ensure that transportation investments are strategic, efficient, and responsive to regional economic needs.

HB 916 includes funding mechanisms to support the proposed authorities through certain local surtaxes. While we understand the need for sustainable transportation investment, additional taxes and surcharges raise important considerations for the business community and the broader economy, including impacts on consumer costs, regional competitiveness, and cumulative tax burdens. We believe further discussion and analysis are warranted to better understand the economic implications of these proposals, evaluate equity across regions and sectors, and ensure appropriate transparency and accountability in how new revenues would be used.

We appreciate your consideration of our comments on **HB 916**.

HB0916-ET_MACo_LOI.pdf

Uploaded by: Kevin Kinnally

Position: INFO



House Bill 916

Transportation - Regional Transportation Authorities

MACo Position: **LETTER OF
INFORMATION**

To: Environment and Transportation and
Appropriations Committees

Date: February 26, 2026

From: Kevin Kinnally

The Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) takes no position on HB 916 but urges the Committee to consider significant policy and fiscal implications for county governments.

Counties recognize that a balanced transportation system includes both strong local road networks and reliable transit options. Local roads connect residents to jobs, schools, and services, while transit supports workforce mobility and regional economic growth. State transportation policy must sustain both.

HB 916 establishes three Regional Transportation Authorities and authorizes new regional tax surcharges dedicated to transportation purposes. The bill directs a majority share of the revenue to newly created regional transportation funds, with the remaining portion distributed to counties and municipalities within each region for transportation use. The regional entities may issue bonds backed by these revenues and must allocate a portion of funding to transit projects.

Local governments own and maintain more than 80% of Maryland's roadways. Unlike the State, counties lack independent authority to levy broad-based transportation revenues and depend largely on Highway User Revenues (HUR) and local property and income taxes to maintain roads, bridges, and related infrastructure.

Any discussion of new transportation revenue mechanisms must begin with the State's long-standing obligation to restore sustainable HUR funding. Counties already operate far below pre-recession HUR levels, and a scheduled drop in fiscal 2028 would reduce HUR funding by nearly \$100 million in a single year. That reduction compounds years of underinvestment in local roads and infrastructure.

The bill creates new regional revenue streams and governance structures while local road systems remain chronically underfunded. Although the bill states that regional funds are supplemental and not intended to replace existing appropriations, counties must evaluate the practical effect on future State transportation allocations. Without clear statutory guardrails or restoration of HUR, new regional funding structures could further complicate Maryland's transportation funding framework.

The bill also centralizes significant authority in regional entities, including bonding authority, project prioritization, and fund allocation. While collaboration across jurisdictions remains important, counties must retain meaningful influence over revenue allocation and project selection within their regions. Governance, accountability, and long-term fiscal sustainability require careful review.

MACo urges the Committee to carefully evaluate how HB 916 interacts with existing commitments and long-standing local transportation needs. Any new regional structure should complement — not supplant — sustainable funding for both transit systems and the local road network that residents rely on every day.

HB 916 - MoCo_MCDOT _Wenger_Info Only (GA 26).pdf

Uploaded by: Melanie Wenger

Position: INFO



Montgomery County

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HB 916

DATE: February 26, 2026

SPONSOR: Delegates Spiegel, et al.

ASSIGNED TO: Environment and Transportation Committee

CONTACT PERSON: Melanie Wenger (melanie.wenger@montgomerycountymd.gov)

POSITION: Informational Only (Montgomery County Department of Transportation)

Transportation – Regional Transportation Authorities

The Montgomery County Department of Transportation (MCDOT) emphasizes the urgent need for greater investment in transportation infrastructure in the State as a necessary precursor for economic development, held back by insufficient mobility and a transportation financing structure in need of modernization. MCDOT, like the Maryland Department of Transportation and our county peers, has insufficient funding to maintain our existing infrastructure while simultaneously trying to increase safety, increase multimodal capacity, and reduce congestion. New and innovative models of funding are needed to make necessary investments that will help keep Maryland moving. House Bill 916 proposes a new model that would result in an increase in available funding to move transportation projects forward.

House Bill 916 establishes the Baltimore, Capital, and Southern Maryland regional transportation authorities. Each regional transportation authority is charged with developing and implementing a regional transportation plan along with a regional transportation fund. The regional transportation fund would receive revenues from a combination of sales tax surcharges, hotel surcharges, and transfer tax surcharges implemented in the member jurisdictions. Funds would be allocated to both regionally significant and locally focused projects using a 70/30 split of the funding available.

Recently, regional transportation authorities have been created as agencies with the ability to collect taxes to plan and fund transportation projects across a defined region. The Northern Virginia Transportation Authority is one example. Montgomery County is interested in exploring the regional authority to generate additional funding, while also ensuring that we are incorporating best practices and considering multiple policy options that go into the creation of a new governmental entity. Therefore, we request a study to explore options for structuring the regional authorities for Maryland with consideration of the unique needs of each region.

We would request that the study consider the following topics:

1. Relationship to existing regional transportation bodies

Currently, transportation planning and project implementation happen at multiple levels of government: state, local, and regionally through our Metropolitan Planning Organization – National Capital Area Transportation Planning Board (TPB). It is unclear how the regional transportation plans would incorporate current local and State transportation priorities. We would like to better understand how the new regional authorities would work with the TPB for the Capital region.

2. Administrative burden

Consideration should be given to minimize additional administrative burdens. Knowing that there are always more needs than funds available, limiting the administrative overhead of a new agency will be critical to ensuring those limited funds deliver the greatest good.

3. Eligible expenses and allocations

We would like to see revenues generated to support transportation projects be directed to new capacity generating or enhancing projects, and not to state of good repair. There are existing programs to finance those needs and that funding should not be supplanted. We would also like to see a larger portion of the funds flow back to the localities (such as a 40/60 split instead of the 30/70 currently proposed). The study should address these considerations, as well as any impact on State transportation funding.

We also recognize that Montgomery County's needs may differ from those of the Baltimore or Southern Maryland regions, as well as those of Frederick and Prince George's County, and jurisdictions benefiting from the regional authorities may have additional study topics.

Given the strong interest in upgrading the State's current antiquated system of financing and deploying transportation infrastructure, MCDOT urges the Environment and Transportation Committee to consider further study of the regional transportation authority model proposed in House Bill 916. While the County would welcome new funding to support transportation, there are unresolved questions that should be explored further prior to moving forward.

HB0916 - LOI - Transportation - Regional Transport

Uploaded by: Patricia Westervelt

Position: INFO

February 26, 2026

The Honorable Marc Korman
Chair, House Environment and Transportation Committee
250 Taylor House Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: Letter of Information – House Bill 916 – Transportation – Regional Transportation Authorities

Dear Chair Korman and Committee Members:

The Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) takes no position on House Bill 916 and offers the following information for the Committee’s consideration.

HB 916 would create three regional transportation authorities in Maryland, one each for the Baltimore, Capital, and Southern Maryland regions of the State. Modeled after the approach taken in Virginia, these Authorities would each have their own specific fund, resourced from specific taxes outlined in the legislation. The authorities would distribute 70 percent of these regional revenues into a regional transportation fund, and the other 30 percent to counties and municipalities within the region for local transportation priorities. Additionally, the legislation creates a Board for each authority, with representation from local and State elected officials, alongside members of the public. The legislation directs the authorities to develop regional transportation plans and to fund regional priority projects and permits the Authorities to construct the facilities in the plan. The authorities are further directed to make recommendations to MDOT regarding transportation funding and financing issues.

The Moore-Miller Administration and the Maryland General Assembly have worked together to address statewide transit needs through the 2025 transportation funding package. Given the State’s regional and interregional transportation networks, such as the MARC system, MDOT believes that any strategy toward regional authorities will need to give consideration to how the State and regions can work together to deliver on transportation needs.

HB 916 assigns substantial transportation planning functions to the new transportation authorities. Alongside MDOT, the State’s Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) play a critical and federally mandated role in developing regional transportation plans. As drafted, the legislation creates a duplicative regional planning model. The Committee may wish to consider integrating MPOs into regional decision-making to avoid such duplication and align with federal processes. Additionally, if authorities were transitioned toward more of a “financing authority” model, whose principal functions are to finance projects identified and implemented by others,

The Honorable Marc Korman
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then MDOT, MPOs, or Counties could identify priority projects, the authority would fund and finance them, and the project sponsor would build them.

Additionally, the successful completion of many major projects requires federal funding. MDOT serves as the direct recipient of federal funding from the Federal Highway Administration and the designated recipient from the Federal Transit Administration. Substantial coordination with MDOT will be required to successfully fund Authority projects, and additional consideration should be given to how the authorities and MDOT would work together to implement successful funding packages for projects.

HB 916, under the newly proposed § 10.5-207 of the Transportation Article, indicates that the authority may construct certain infrastructure. The State of Maryland has ample public agencies at the State and local level that are qualified to deliver major infrastructure projects. Therefore, MDOT suggests that authorities not be included as one of the parties responsible for the ongoing implementation and operation of transportation facilities.

Finally, HB 916 directs the authorities to evaluate regional projects quantitatively. As the Committee is aware, MDOT has proposed legislation to address the project evaluation and prioritization process, known as Chapter 30. A new authority structure would benefit from making use of the reformed prioritization approach to ensure that projects funded by the authorities represent the projects with largest benefit for the region and the State. The criteria proposed for evaluation in HB 916 do not correspond with the breadth of either the existing or proposed prioritization goals and should be brought into alignment with those statewide priorities.

The Maryland Department of Transportation respectfully requests that the Committee consider this information when deliberating House Bill 916.

Respectfully submitted,

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