



**SUBURBAN MARYLAND
TRANSPORTATION ALLIANCE**

HB: 1249 Oppose

As Vice Chair of Suburban Maryland Transportation Alliance (SMTA), I would like to submit written testimony in opposition to HB1249. This poorly constructed piece of legislation risks cutting off funds, thereby delaying or endangering a project that will offer traffic relief for Montgomery, Frederick and Prince George's county residents. Your constituents in these geographic areas experience severe traffic delays with I-270 often resembling a parking lot for up to 7 hours during the day. This is no way to live. As responsible legislators you cannot continue to ignore the needs of the voters who overwhelmingly support infrastructure improvements such as the P3 Traffic Relief Plan. The P3 is a source of funding that cannot be replaced-there is no other money to fund like improvements.

This bill imposes limitations on the use of dedicated transit funds and establishes nuisance requirements that must be dealt with prior to the issuance of a final Request for Proposal. The 10% of toll revenue requirement for dedicated transit funds goes way beyond what the Board of Public Works required in their earlier approval conditions, which was 10% of NET state proceeds, a factor that may not be commercially viable, and potentially could endanger the P3 program's viability. The bill also unnecessarily requires redundant environmental studies currently underway in conjunction with the NEPA process. As proposed, the tenets of the bill reflect an awkward and unusual amount of control.

The Bill's requirement to share origin and destination data with other agencies is useless and repetitive, given that local agencies have access to this information in the COG traffic model, the basis for MDOT's traffic analyses. Regional planning agencies have long studied the question of funding and modes and recognize that a network of both new toll lanes and new transit services are needed to address the needs of the region.

This bill toys with cutting off funds if certain requirements are not met. We cannot ignore the fact that the beltway is congested 10 hours per day, making us the envy of the rest of the country with some of the worst traffic anywhere. This type of traffic congestion has and continues to have deleterious impacts on the regional economy by hindering growth in employment and business investment, while making it difficult for employers to attract both talent and customers whose decisions regarding both are often negatively impacted by the endless traffic. The cost of congestion is roughly \$2,000 per resident per year. As a legislator, is this a responsibility that you want to assume?

This bill injects the element of uncertainty into the P3 process and could seriously delay or endanger the project's future and the issuance of the P3. This is not a path that your constituents support. Think clearly and vote to oppose this bill.

Jennifer Russel