

Testimony on behalf of the Carderock Springs Citizens Association and Riverhill Homeowners Association

January 29, 2020 Senate Finance Committee hearing regarding expanding to all counties in the State a prohibition on State agencies constructing within the nine Eastern Shore counties a toll road, toll highway, or toll bridge without the consent of a majority of the affected counties

My name is John Tiernan and I live at 7916 Quarry Ridge Way. I am here today as a County resident, and a representative of Riverhill and Carderock Springs communities.

Carderock Springs Citizens Association and Riverhill Homeowners Association strongly support SB0229. Our Associations have spent countless hours working to protect our neighborhoods from the significant air and noise pollution caused by the I-495 Beltway traffic. Our neighborhoods are located directly adjacent to the Beltway, between the River Road and Clara Barton Parkway exits. We are greatly concerned about air pollution from increased Beltway traffic on children's lung development and the impact of highway noise on the general health and quality of life of the residents of our communities. We are experiencing these impacts today, and things will only get worse if the Beltway is expanded. MDOT is currently considering Beltway expansion alternatives that pose many of these risks, as well as risks to the environment, our homes and schools. Given what is at stake, both our communities stand strongly behind bill SB0229, which will allow all counties (not only those on the Eastern Shore) to oversee planning of any toll lane projects.

Our previous meetings with Montgomery County representatives confirm that the County has a deep knowledge on how to effectively decrease traffic congestion and increase trip reliability while minimizing the negative environmental, health, and safety, impacts in our communities. The County is able to identify more comprehensive approaches that focus on reducing congestion of arterial roads as well.

Our Associations have raised our concerns to State Highway Administration (SHA) throughout the I-495 & I-270 comment period and did not see any indication that our feedback was considered or reflected in the alternatives selected by SHA for moving forward.

Our support for this legislation is also rooted in past failures of the SHA to honor its commitments to mitigate noise and air pollution during the last changes to the Beltway. A noise barrier wall was promised by SHA to Carderock Springs community but never delivered.

We strongly believe that counties have much more detailed information on local transportation conditions, and therefore should have a seat at the table for decisions of such great magnitude, such as a multi-billion-dollar beltway expansion.

Thank you for bringing such important bill to the Maryland General Assembly. We urge everyone to vote "Yes" on SB0229.

John Tiernan, President , Riverhill Homeowners Association

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