

BARBARA NOVEAU, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR,  
DO THE MOST GOOD—MONTGOMERY COUNTY

**BILL NO:** SB0229

**DATE:** January 27, 2020

**BILL TITLE:** Toll Roads, Highways, and Bridges - County Government Consent Requirement - Expansion

**COMMITTEE:** Senate Finance Committee

**POSITION:** *SUPPORT*

**BILL CONTACT:** Senator Susan Lee.

**To:** The Honorable Delores Kelly, Chair, Finance Committee, and Committee Members

I am the executive director of DoTheMostGood—Montgomery County, a progressive organization with more than 1700 members who live in a wide range of communities from Bethesda near the DC line north to Germantown and from Potomac east to Silver Spring -- communities that will all be affected by the massive public-private-partnership (P3) project proposed by the Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) to add 72 miles of privatized, for-profit toll lanes to I-270 north to Frederick and to I-495 from the American Legion Bridge all the way to the Wilson Bridge.

The top-down exclusionary process MDOT has used to move forward with the P3 project over the past two years underscores the need for SB0229. MDOT has ignored local input and stonewalled requests for data from residents, Montgomery, Prince Georges and Frederick county governments and planning boards, and the National Capital Park and Planning Commission.

Enactment of SB0229 will require MDOT to seek input from counties affected by proposed toll road projects from the beginning, rather than as an afterthought, and will improve the results for the state. SB0229 will help ensure public accountability and transparency when new toll facilities, especially inherently profit-focused P3 projects, are considered. It will also ensure that MDOT appropriately incorporates the expertise of local county governments about traffic problems and land use in making decisions about major highway projects.

SB0229 is a common-sense and fair measure that will not set any new precedents in Maryland. In contrast, it will ensure that the state applies a uniform process for all toll road projects and will provide all Maryland counties with the same opportunity that nine counties on the Maryland Eastern shore have had for decades. SB0229 will not cancel any project. It will simply require consent of those most affected by proposed toll road projects to ensure the projects reflect county, as well as state, priorities and objectives. SB0229 will help ensure that state agencies cannot simply ignore local policies and priorities concerning land use and transportation.

Therefore, DoTheMostGood recommends a **FAVORABLE** report on SB0229.

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