

**Statement by Citizens Against Beltway Expansion
In Support of HB 485
Regarding Public-Private Partnerships – Process and Oversight
Before the Environment and Transportation Committee
February 9, 2021
Barbara Coufal, Co-Chair
P.O. Box 3593, Silver Spring, MD 20918**

Chair Barve, Vice Chair Stein, members of the Committee, Citizens Against Beltway Expansion thanks you for the opportunity to share our strong support for House Bill 485.

The need for this bill's reforms has become even more evident since we testified in support of this bill last year. As you know, the Purple Line P3 triggered a \$250 million unbudgeted taxpayer bailout when it fell apart. The \$11 billion I-495/I-270 expansion exposes taxpayers to substantially more risk, despite MDOT's claims.

We do not believe that the Purple Line P3 fiasco was a fluke. Independent research shows that P3s continually surprise taxpayers with expensive demands for more support.

To reduce the risk of future and unaffordable P3 surprises, we strongly support HB 485's provisions for greater fiscal and environmental transparency. We also strongly support its establishment of a Review Board to ensure long-term accountability and give the General Assembly oversight over future and existing P3 projects.

In light of MDOT's handling of the I-495/I-270 P3, we strongly endorse the bill's requirement for federal environmental reviews to be completed before the State can enter into P3 presolicitation agreements. We also strongly endorse the provision to prevent P3s from demanding compensation when planned roads and public transport could reduce congestion on a P3 toll road.

Although the bill would not stop the addition of for-profit toll lanes to I-495 and I-270, it will better ensure oversight, protect taxpayer wallets and Maryland's

credit rating, and provide greater predictability for future projects that could otherwise have significant negative impacts on our State for decades to come.

As you know, this legislation was overwhelmingly approved by the House of Delegates last year. We urge you to again report this bill favorably and quickly.