

February 5, 2021

Delegate Kumar P. Barve
Chair, Environment and Transportation Committee
Maryland House of Delegates
Room 251, House Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: HB485 - Public-Private Partnerships - Process and Oversight

Position: **OPPOSE**

Dear Chairman Barve, Vice Chair Stein and Members of the Committee:

On behalf of our 500-member businesses and more than 45,000 employees in Montgomery County, this statement is in **Opposition to HB485 "Public Private Partnerships-Process and Oversight"**. This is a repeat performance of an obstructionist bill submitted for consideration last year (HB1424) that proceeded nowhere. This bill and its predecessor are one in a series of efforts to waylay the ambitious P3 highway program that seeks to offer congestion relief and economic freedom for Montgomery County and the surrounding region. By adding redundant bureaucratic oversight, and unnecessary reporting requirements, passage of this bill would guarantee delay for a project that is well on its way to beginning construction in 2022.

The P3 program is a win for businesses and residents throughout our County. It is a key part of the region's adopted long-range plan and the fact that the American Legion Bridge is now part and parcel of this project is a dream come true. The bridge is one of the nation's worst bottlenecks and is presently congested 10 hours day on average. A new bridge is desperately needed with managed lanes that can carry commuter buses and carpoolers for free. We must continue to seek a balanced approach with Roads and Transit to keep Maryland competitive and create jobs, particularly in the upcoming post-pandemic era where economic recovery should be a priority.

We urge you to recognize that traffic is already rebounding to near pre-COVID-19 levels. The time to act on the P3 is **now** when interest rates are low, and the project is feasible. Proceeding forth with this onerous piece of legislation is a recipe for delay and congestion. It seeks to void the P3 process which has been studied and implemented with care. This is a project that is needed for Maryland, Montgomery County and the region as a whole as we emerge from the darkness of 2020, the pandemic and its companion economic crisis.

We urge you to give an UNFAVORABLE report on this bill. Thank you for your consideration of our remarks.

Sincerely,



Allie Williams
President & CEO