

**Statement by Citizens Against Beltway Expansion in Support of HB 67
Regarding I-495 and I-270 Public-Private Partnership
Partnership Agreement - Requirements
Before the Environment and Transportation Committee
February 12, 2021
Brad German, Co-Chair
P.O. Box 3593, Silver Spring, MD 20918**

Chair Barve, Vice Chair Stein, members of the Environment and Transportation Committee, thank you for the opportunity for Citizens Against Beltway Expansion to share its support for House Bill 67, the Maryland State Department of Transportation Promises Act of 2021.

House Bill 67 would codify commitments that the Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) has made to state and local officials about the proposed I-495/I-270 P3 tollway expansion, including promises made to this committee last year. The MDOT promises HB67 would codify include:

- No State subsidies for the project;
- No contract will go to the Board of Public Works until the environmental review process is complete and the Final Environmental Impact Statement is available;
- 10% of toll revenue will be designated for transit projects in Montgomery and Prince George's counties;
- MDOT will share origin and destination data and traffic and revenue modeling data with local officials.

We are highlighting these promises because they are substantial commitments and MDOT is renegeing on all of them.

While both the Governor and MDOT have repeatedly stated that the project would have no net cost to State taxpayers, MDOT's Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) shows otherwise. According to the DEIS the project will require a State subsidy of at least \$482 million. This does not account for cost overruns, the cost of moving water/sewer lines that will cost WSSC fee payers as much as \$1.8 billion, or the public funds that will be needed to manage the additional runoff from the proposal's estimated 550 acres of new road surface.

The Administration promised it would not send the Board of Public Works a developer contract until the environmental impact review was complete. Now MDOT says it will submit one as early as April, months before the Final Environmental Impact Statement on Phase One is done and before a draft EIS for I-270 north of I-370 has even begun. MDOT received nearly 3,000 comments to its DEIS, over 80% of which opposed the project. The developer will receive \$50

million if the project doesn't proceed under the planned agreement. HB67 is needed because MDOT is breaking its promise and irresponsibly adding to taxpayer risks and costs.

MDOT promised that 10% of toll revenues would go to Montgomery and Prince George's counties for transit projects. But, MDOT's December 2020 request for proposal now says transit funding will be subject to the concessionaire's determination that a project is financially viable. The I-495/I-270 contractor has an obvious conflict-of-interest and should not have veto power over County transit projects funded through toll revenues on I-495 or I-270.

For two years, MDOT has repeatedly promised to share key data with planning agencies, including the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission. MDOT has failed to do so.

MDOT has promised construction workers would be paid a union wage. If good paying jobs are important to the General Assembly, then it must pass HB67 to ensure that promise isn't broken, either.

We don't like the expansion project. But, whether or not the expansion goes forward, it is imperative that the Administration can be held accountable for the promises its making to the public and the General Assembly. We strongly urge the Committee to report HB 67 favorably and quickly.