



February 5, 2021

Written testimony for [HB485](#)- Public-Private Partnerships - Process and Oversight

Position: Favorable

Hearing Date: February 9, 2021

Submitted by Denisse Guitarra

Maryland Conservation Advocate, Audubon Naturalist Society (ANS)

Dear House Environment and Transportation Committee,

For 124 years, Audubon Naturalist Society (ANS) has inspired people to enjoy, learn about and protect nature. We thank the House Environment and Transportation Committee for the opportunity to provide testimony for HB485, "Public- Private- Partnerships- Process and Oversight." **ANS supports HB485.**

HB485 would ensure that the state waits until the final environmental impact statement (FEIS) is released before moving forward with a P3 project. This make certain that the state obtains all critical information it needs to truly assess the future environmental and economic viability of long term P3 projects.

As seen from the current I-495/I-270 Beltway Expansion project, lacking a clear P3 oversight puts at peril the health and wellbeing of people, wildlife, and waterways. In this case, the state is moving forward with a taxpayer-guaranteed contract even if the FEIS shows that the preferred alternative would have unacceptable environmental impacts, ensuring either a) a significant loss of taxpayer dollars or b) increased pressure to go ahead and build given the sunk costs, making the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) analysis a paper exercise only and not the means to truly inform decision-making that it is meant to be. We oppose *both* the I 495/ I 270 expansion *and* the practice of using P3s to bypass federally required environmental analysis.

We support HB485 because it is critical that the General Assembly limits the Board of Public Works' (BPW) power by demanding the full review and completion of environmental impact studies before approving any P3 project. ANS and our 28,000 members and supporters recommend that the House Environment and Transportation Committee supports the passage of HB485.

Sincerely,
Denisse Guitarra
Audubon Naturalist Society
Maryland Conservation Advocate

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