



BARRY GLASSMAN

HARFORD COUNTY EXECUTIVE

Senate Bill 726

Transportation – Highway User Revenues – Revenue and Distribution

Position: SUPPORT

To: Senate Budget and Taxation Committee

Date: March 09, 2022

From: HARFORD COUNTY

HARFORD COUNTY SUPPORTS SB 726. This bill fully restores the local share of highway user revenues and holds the State to its long-standing responsibility to help fund public infrastructure.

Highway user revenue restoration will supply desperately needed funding to repair and maintain local roads and bridges.

Recession-driven budget cuts decimated the local share of Highway User Revenues and have left local roadways, bridges, and other public infrastructure in dire need of maintenance and repair. Re-investing in infrastructure – a call heard at every level of government – is good for Maryland jobs, business attractiveness, residents' safety, and overall quality of life across the state.

Harford County owns and maintains over **1,000 miles** of County roads. We saw a **90% drop** in HUR funding in FY 09, which has not been restored over the past 13 years. We have had to suspend our programs to convert our older tar and chip roads to asphalt, and have had to defer and scale back our road resurfacing program. Without these critical and previously programmed improvements, our roads are aging more quickly, making them more susceptible to damage and are requiring additional repair efforts.

The cumulative loss of local roadway investment since FY 2007 is over \$4.5 billion. With local governments maintaining 83% of the roads in Maryland, this represents a significant and critical loss for local resources.

The State created the highway user revenue formula in 1968, and for more than forty years afterward, local governments had received at least 30 percent of transportation revenues— mostly motor fuel tax and vehicle registration fees—to fund their roads and bridges. The Great Recession forced cuts to this area deeper than those in any other component of the state budget. Twenty-three counties' share of funds plummeted from nearly \$300 million in 2007 to only \$40 million in 2018: an 87 percent decimation. In 2018, Baltimore City alone received nearly \$100 million less than it did before the cuts.

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In 2018, a temporary phase-in was passed to provide emergency relief for local infrastructure projects – bringing those twenty-three counties to only a third of their previous, fully funded amounts – but it is set to expire in FY 2025. If **SB 726** does not pass, local infrastructure funding will again plummet, this time by about \$76.8 million, further stressing county budgets already strained by the national health pandemic, a weakened economy, aggressive education funding mandates, and other state obligations.

Harford County has a cumulative loss of over **\$150 Million** in Highway User Revenues between FY 2009 and FY 2023.

The full restoration of this funding will mean better, safer, more modern infrastructure for travel, economic development, and the quality of life of Maryland's residents.

Highway user revenues fund roads and bridges across Maryland through an equitable, time-tested formula based on road mileage and vehicle registrations. This touches the roads our kids ride to school, the roads our first responders travel to keep us safe, and the roads where we all live. Without restoration of the traditional share of highway user revenues to local governments, counties and municipalities will have minimal means to address infrastructure maintenance and keep our communities safe and moving.

SB 726 returns the transportation dollars to the 83% of roads and bridges maintained by local governments in Maryland. It brings back transportation dollars to our local communities. This bill restores these desperately needed funds to their intended purpose.

Accordingly, Harford County respectfully urges the Committee to give **SB 726** a **FAVORABLE REPORT** to fund all local roadways.

Sincerely,



Barry Glassman

Harford County Executive