



COUNTY COUNCIL OF TALBOT COUNTY

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March 8, 2022

The Honorable Guy Guzzone
Chair – Budget and Taxation Committee
3 West Miller Senate Office Building
11 Bladen Street
Annapolis, MD 21401

The Honorable Jim Rosapepe
Vice-Chair – Budget and Taxation Committee
3 West Miller Senate Office Building
11 Bladen Street
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: SB726 – TRANSPORTATION – HIGHWAY USER REVENUES – REVENUE AND DISTRIBUTION

FAVORABLE

Dear Chair Guzzone, Vice-Chair Rosapepe, and Members:

TALBOT COUNTY SUPPORTS SB726/HB1187. 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.

Talbot County maintains a total of 372.3 miles of roadway. With the increase in traffic in recent years, numerous sections of road are failing and in need of critical attention, which is costly.

The cumulative loss of local roadway investment in Maryland 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 40 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.

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 SB726/HB1187 does not pass, local infrastructure funding will again plummet, this time by approximately \$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.

Since FY2010, Talbot County has had a cumulative loss of \$34 million in Highway User Revenues.

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.

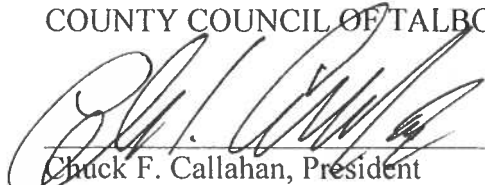
Highway user revenues fund roads and bridges across Maryland through an equitable, time-tested formula based on road mileage and vehicle registrations. This touches the roads our children ride to school, the roads our first responders travel to keep us safe, and the roads where we all live. Without restoration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

SB726/HB1187 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, Talbot County respectfully urges the Committee to give SB726/HB1187 a **FAVORABLE** report to fund all local roadways.

Sincerely,


COUNTY COUNCIL OF TALBOT COUNTY



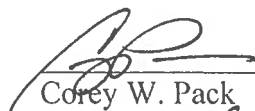
Chuck F. Callahan, President




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Frank Divilio



Corey W. Pack



Laura E. Price