

Committee: Environment and Transportation
Testimony: Maryland Transportation Funding Act of 2024 (HB 1215)
Position: Favorable
Hearing Date: March 1, 2024

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Chesapeake Climate Action Network Action Fund

On behalf of the Chesapeake Climate Action Network Action Fund, we strongly support the Maryland Transportation Funding Act of 2024 (HB 1215). This legislation tackles the evolving dynamics of our transportation network by creating reliable funding streams derived from the growing utilization of trucks for last-mile delivery. These trucks contribute to wear and tear, congestion, and CO2 emissions in our community. By establishing sustainable revenue sources, this legislation empowers us to meet our transportation demands while prioritizing investments in infrastructure that align with our climate objectives.

The Act's provisions demonstrate a commitment to sustainable transportation funding by imposing fees on retail deliveries and transportation network company services, thereby creating revenue streams that can be reinvested in transportation infrastructure and initiatives. This approach aligns with the state's transportation priorities and promotes equitable access to essential transportation services for all Maryland residents.

Two proposed fees in the legislation aim to address transportation and environmental challenges. The first, a \$0.50 fee on online purchases subject to state sales tax, targets last-mile delivery's wear, congestion, and CO2 emissions surpassing those of all replaced passenger trips. The second fee, also \$0.50, targets ride-hailing services, which, despite being promoted as congestion reducers, often worsen congestion and emit more CO2 than the modes they replace.

By prioritizing capital needs identified in assessments and distributing funds to counties and municipalities for specified purposes, the Act establishes a clear pathway for addressing infrastructure demands and enhancing transportation systems across Maryland. Furthermore, the allocation of remaining funds to the Locally Operated Transit System Grant Program ensures that resources are directed towards supporting vital transit services that benefit communities statewide.

In conclusion, we urge the Committee to find the Maryland Transportation Funding Act of 2024 favorable as it represents a significant step towards addressing transportation challenges, investing in infrastructure, and advancing sustainable transportation solutions in our state.