

\* 1000 Friends of Maryland \* Bike Maryland \* Coalition for Smarter  
Growth \* Montgomery Countryside Alliance

March 14, 2011

**Testimony on SB 971 –  
Maryland Transportation Financing and Infrastructure Investment Act of 2012  
Budget and Tax**

**Position: Favorable with amendments**

The groups listed above support a vibrant transportation fund, and we recognize that the current economic downturn has hit the transportation trust fund hard. However, we believe that transportation revenues should be increased only if every new dollar is invested more wisely.

More revenue is needed to maintain a strategic, progressive investment in our transportation infrastructure. But before we ask Marylanders to pay more for transportation we must assure them that we are investing wisely and not continuing the same funding strategies that created the congested, high cost transportation system we have today. Maryland's leaders must commit to:

- Maintain and repair existing infrastructure, including roads and bridges, before building new;
- Revisit near-term spending decisions and long-term project selection to fund projects that meet the growing demand for more transportation choices that save time and money and help reduce our dependence on foreign oil;
- Spark innovation and cost-savings through a competitive transportation solutions program; and
- Fund the biggest jobs creator, public transportation.

Maryland's economy faces significant challenges. We must spend our transportation dollars more wisely to repair current infrastructure and then invest the balance strategically on projects with high return. No matter how much transportation trust fund revenue the state brings in, it will never be enough to build every project – nor would it be in the best interest of the state's economy, environment, or communities to do so. In times of economic scarcity it becomes even more critical that every project Maryland builds meets clear goals and standards.

The groups listed above thank the committee for its consideration of this important matter.

**Before moving forward with any gas tax increase, we ask that the committee adopt language ensuring that those additional revenues will be used to create the transportation system that best moves Maryland forward.**

*(Amendment language on reverse.)*

## **Transportation Funds for a Strong Maryland: Amending the Gas Tax**

Before we ask Marylanders to pay more for transportation we must assure that that we are investing wisely and not continuing the same funding strategies that created the congested, high cost transportation system we have today. That is why we offer the following amendments to SB971/ HB1302. These amendments would require any new gas tax revenue to go towards fixing Maryland's existing infrastructure and creating transportation choices; target local revenues on fixing and maintaining existing infrastructure; and ensure that new road construction serves existing communities.

1) **§ 3-216. Transportation Trust Fund.** Add a new clause to §(d):

(5) Starting in fiscal year 2013, the Department shall utilize 80% of the total funding in the Transportation Trust Fund, including all of its share of the revenues attributable to the increase of the motor fuel tax, the vehicle titling tax, the vanity license plate fees, any other transportation related tax or fee that is credited to the Transportation Trust Fund, and the proceeds of any increased indebtedness based on that revenue and credited to the Transportation Trust Fund, to fund Department projects for:

- (i) Rehabilitation and reconstruction of State roads and bridges that are structurally deficient;
- (ii) The construction, reconstruction, or expansion of public bicycle areas as defined in § 21-101(o) of this article; bicycle ways as defined in § 21-101(d) of this article; or sidewalks as defined in § 21-101(w) of this article;
- (iii) The construction, reconstruction, expansion, and operation of the State transit system, including the Red Line project in Baltimore City, the Purple Line project in Montgomery and Prince George's Counties, and the MARC Growth and Investment plan; and
- (iv) Expansion and operation of commuter, connect a ride, and local bus services.

2) **§ 8-408. Permitted uses of highway user revenues.** Add a new (3) to §(b):

(3) Notwithstanding any other provisions of this section, not more than 5% of a county's highway user revenues on an annual basis may go towards the construction of new roads or streets. This provision does not apply to new construction for:

- (i) Local street interconnections;
- (ii) Public bicycle areas as defined in § 21-101(o) of this article;
- (ii) Bicycle ways as defined in § 21-101(d) of this article; and
- (iii) Sidewalks as defined in § 21-101(w) of this article.

3) **§ 8-402.1 Local Transportation Infrastructure Aid Account.** Add a new (G):

(g) Notwithstanding any other provisions of this section, not more than 5% of the Local Transportation Infrastructure Aid Account funds delivered to a county or municipality on an annual basis may go towards the construction of new roads or streets. This provision does not apply to new construction for:

- (1) Local street interconnections;

- (2) Public bicycle areas as defined in § 21-101(o) of this article;
- (3) Bicycle ways as defined in § 21-101(d) of this article; and
- (4) Sidewalks as defined in § 21-101(w) of this article.

**4) § 8-410. Approval required for construction or reconstruction by county or municipality.**

Add a new 'and' clause:

- (2) Serve Priority Funding Areas designated under [insert code] of the Planning law;
- (3) Serve to enhance or create:
  - (1) Local street interconnections;
  - (2) Public bicycle areas as defined in § 21-101(o) of this article;
  - (3) Bicycle ways as defined in § 21-101(d) of this article; and
  - (4) Sidewalks as defined in § 21-101(w) of this article; or
- (4) Serve areas outside of Priority Funding Areas by:
  - (1) Improving public safety with a minimum capacity expansion; or
  - (2) Upgrading roads and bridges found structurally deficient.