

July 20, 2021

Hon. Charles Allen  
Chair, National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board

Re: TPB Vote on Capital Beltway/I-270 and the Long-Range Transportation Plan

Chair Allen and members of the TPB:

I will keep our comments short:

- 1) Governor Hogan and MDOT have:
  - a. Completely failed to objectively study alternatives to the toll lanes
  - b. Put the P3 negotiations and contracts ahead of completion of the EIS, and biased the entire process for private toll lanes.
  - c. Run a scorched-earth political campaign which demonstrates their bias.
- 2) The toll lane deals for 495Next in Virginia and for Maryland not only lack the commitment to transit funding we need, the non-compete provisions appear to prevent future Metrorail at the American Legion Bridge and other transit investments.
- 3) Climate change is an existential threat. Contrary to MDOT arguments, highway expansion increases driving and CO2 emissions. It is astounding to see massive highway expansion proposed while the Arctic and Antarctic melts, the West burns, Europe floods, and shellfish cooks on the beaches of Canada.
- 4) The toll lanes would reinforce the East-West economic divide in our region condemning Prince George's commuters to either paying very high tolls or sitting in the general-purpose lane traffic that the toll road companies depend on to generate their profits.
- 5) A far better alternative is Maryland investment in transit-oriented development on the east side of the region, which would increase jobs, shorten commutes, even out the flows on the Beltway and Metrorail, and help address the E-W economic and racial divide.

**Therefore, we urge you to stand by your vote to remove the toll lanes from the TPB's long range plan and honestly to take the same step for the 495Next project** -- in order to force objective consideration of alternatives, the climate impacts, and the development of the most sustainable and effective alternative with the least impact on parks and communities.

**We are running out of time on the climate and are failing to do what needs to be done to address the E-W economic and racial divide. We need your leadership.**

Thank you.

Stewart Schwartz  
Executive Director