

* 1000 Friends of Maryland * Baltimore Bicycle Club
* Bicycling Advocates of Howard County *
Citizens Planning and Housing Association * Clean Water Action *
Coalition for Smarter Growth * College Park Area Bicycle Coalition *
League of American Bicyclists * Maryland Public Interest Research Group
* Montgomery Bicycle Advocates * One Less Car * Oxon Hill Bicycle and
Trail Club * Washington Area Bicycle Association*

March 11, 2010

**Testimony on SB 760
Transportation - Consolidated Transportation Program -
Evaluation and Selection of Proposed Capital Projects
Budget and Taxation**

Position: Favorable

The groups listed above support SB 760, which would require MDOT to evaluate all state-funded transportation projects against critical state goals. This change would add predictability and outcome-based analysis to the process for determining how critical, and limited, state transportation dollars are spent.

Maryland's transportation system needs clear and bold goals to ensure prosperity, access to good jobs, and environmental sustainability for all Marylanders. This means improving the way we plan our transportation system to ensure that every dollar spent on transportation projects results in a system that works better for all Marylanders.

Our current transportation system is simply too costly to residents, the environment, and the government. Transportation and housing costs combined in the DC region are over 45% of the median income, a cost too great for many households to bear. The transportation sector accounted for 32% of greenhouse gas emissions in 2005, and that number continues to increase. And the recent snowstorms – although an extreme example – have proven that maintaining our current system has many hidden costs that can cripple both state and local governments' budgets.

SB 760 takes a critical step towards a smarter transportation system by linking our state goals to how our state dollars are spent. Those goals include ones already listed in the Maryland Transportation Plan, such as quality of service, safety and security, system preservation, environmental stewardship, and connectivity for daily life; and other state policies, such as goals in the state development plan and the climate action plan. Only major capital projects would be impacted by this change, so projects that simply maintain existing infrastructure will not be affected.

The bill also adds openness and accountability to the process by requiring entities that request state funds to provide more specific information on the need for that funding, such as the location of the project, the need for the project, and an explanation of how the project meets state transportation goals. The Department of Transportation must then make that information available to the public for any projects that do get funding. And the specific criteria used by the Department in evaluating transportation projects must be reviewed annually by the Smart Growth Subcabinet to ensure multi-agency review and feedback.

The groups above thank the committee for its consideration of this important matter and respectfully request a favorable report.