

Support House Bill 67

Maryland Department of Transportation Promises Act of 2021

What HB 67 Would Do

HB 67 would put into statute commitments that the Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) has made to the Board of Public Works and other officials regarding the plan to build private, for-profit, toll lanes on I-270 and I-495. Among other requirements, the bill provides that:

- No funding from taxpayers will be used to subsidize the project;
- A federally-compliant final environmental impact statement will be available before MDOT asks the Board of Public Works to approve any contract;
- Data used to estimate congestion relief, set tolls and inform other matters will be shared with local government planners;
- 10% of toll revenue will be made available for transit priorities of Montgomery County and Prince George's County;
- Public hearings will be held over toll amounts;
- Buses and other transit will be able to use the toll lanes for free;
- Bicycle/pedestrian lane(s) will be added to the American Legion Bridge;
- MDOT will study the feasibility of Monorail along I-270;
- No homes will be purchased before construction contracts are approved; and
- The project concessionaire will be required to initiate a community benefits agreement.

Why HB 67 is Needed

The Hogan administration has already reneged on important commitments it has made about this project. For example, the Governor promised that no taxpayer funding would be used for it. However, the draft environmental impact statement (EIS) shows that taxpayers will be on the hook for \$482 million to \$1 billion for the cost of this project. In a legislative hearing earlier this year, Transportation Secretary Greg Slater promised that no contract would be submitted to the Board of Public Works for approval until the final EIS was complete. But in December, MDOT announced that it would submit a pre-development contract to the Board in May, although the agency has indicated that the EIS process will not be completed at that time. In 2018, Governor Hogan told voters that no homes would be taken to make way for the toll lanes. Since then, the State has acknowledged that as many as 34 homes will be taken.

Promises have been broken on another transportation project – the Harry Nice Bridge. Originally the administration said that it would include bicycle/pedestrian lanes. But those lanes have been scuttled.

The administration has shown that we cannot count on its promises. House Bill 67 will help ensure that commitments made to state and local officials will be kept.