Protect Maryland From I-495 & I-270 Expansion

DID YOU KNOW:

- The threat of new, substantial highway expansion is real. Governor Hogan is actively promoting an up to $11 billion plan to add four toll lanes to the Capital Beltway and I-270, which would result in hundreds of miles of new lanes. The proposal calls for the toll lanes to be paid for by a 50-year contract, and would be the largest public-private partnership (P3) for highways in North America.¹

- Numerous studies show that expanding highways simply encourages more people to drive, increasing the number of cars on the road that emit greenhouse gases and air pollution.²

- The transportation sector now is the largest contributor to climate change emissions and premature deaths related to air pollution.³ Over 88% of Marylanders live in counties that are in nonattainment with federal clean air standards for ozone, due in large part to gas and diesel-powered vehicles.⁴ Poor air quality increases the risk of cancers, heart disease, asthma, emphysema, and other respiratory diseases.

- When I-270 was expanded the last time to up to 12 lanes in some stretches, the highway was supposed to handle growth in traffic for at least 20 years. But less than eight years after the project was completed in 1991, it was completely congested again.

- A 2016 report from the Department of Transportation indicated that in the last decade, many U.S. highway public-private partnerships (P3s) have experienced financial distress due to lower-than-expected revenue and their inability to manage risk.⁵

1. Maryland Department of Transportation. Presolicitation Information Memorandum I-495 and I-270 P3 Program. November 2018
2. Transportation Research Record. “Latest evidence on induced travel demand: an evidence review” May 2018
3. MIT Laboratory for Aviation and the Environment. “Study: Air Pollution Causes 200,000 early deaths each year in the U.S.” Aug 2013
4. Environmental Protection Agency. Maryland Nonattainment/Maintenance Status for Each County by Year for All Criteria Pollutants. Jan 2019

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What Should We Do:

Maryland needs to ensure that our transportation plans and investments are consistent with our state’s goals to reduce climate pollution. Our major investments should be clearly and explicitly based on their ability to help the state meet its goal of reducing greenhouse gases by 40% by 2030 (established by the state’s Greenhouse Gas Reduction Act), and the necessity to substantially reduce air pollution.

We need to direct our transportation dollars to increasing mass transit, electric vehicle infrastructure, and car and van-pooling, and promoting walkable, bikeable communities. Our goal should be getting more people to where they want to be in a reliable, cleaner manner versus enabling more vehicles to travel faster.

In 2018, we joined with Virginia and DC to provide multi-year, dedicated funding to the DC-area Metro system to support essential system updates and improvements — hundreds of thousands of Marylanders rely on this system, taking thousands of cars off the roadways.

In mid-December, Maryland agreed to join with eight other Northeast and Mid-Atlantic states, and Washington, DC, to move forward with developing a regional clean transportation program, called the Transportation and Climate Initiative (TCI). In order to meet our Greenhouse Gas Reduction Act goal, the transportation sector itself must join in reducing greenhouse gases by at least 40% by 2030. This means that transportation plans, including highway expansion, must be shown to clearly reduce pollution in the long-term, and not put more gas-guzzling, CO2-emitting cars on the road.

Take Action:

Email transportation@mdsierra.org or call 301-277-7111 to volunteer and join our highway expansion team to help stop this dangerous proposal in its tracks.

What do volunteers do?

- Plan and develop strategies and actions
- Participate in educational events and rallies
- Testify at public hearings and meetings on proposed local legislation and plans
- Lobby your elected officials
- Research information, write and design print and online content
- Collect petition signatures