



Background and Tips for Drafting Written Comments on the I-495 and I-270 Expansion Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS)

Background. The Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) issued a draft environmental impact statement for the I-495/I-270 expansion on July 10, 2020. The DEIS helps to ensure that public agencies consider potential environmental (physical, social and biological) impacts and alternatives before making a decision on an infrastructure project.

Public comments are critical. Public comments alert agencies to deficiencies in the DEIS and lay the foundation for future legal and political action. They also signal public concern about the impact of the project on communities, the environment and taxpayers. Comments submitted by Maryland residents do not need to be long or complicated – more technical comments will be submitted by experts.

Key phrase to include. To ensure that MDOT counts your comment, it is critical that you include the following statement: **I oppose this project and support the NO-BUILD option.**

MDOT is accepting public comments until 11:59 pm on November 9th, 2020.

Who can comment? Any concerned resident can submit comments. You do not need special expertise.

How do I comment?

You can e-mail a written comment to: MLS-NEPA-P3@mdot.maryland.gov

You can mail a comment to:

Lisa B. Choplin, DBIA Director I-495 & I-270 P3 Office
Maryland Dept. of Transportation, State Highway Administration
707 North Calvert St.
Mail Stop P=601
Baltimore, MD 21201

Additional Tips for Your Comment

Introduce Yourself

- Give your name, your address and how close you are to the project.
- Provide your occupation or background if you have relevant expertise such as transportation planning, engineering or law.

State that you support the NO-BUILD option. Supporting the no-build option does not necessarily mean you don't support any alternatives. Rather, by supporting the no-build option you are telling MDOT that you don't support the current slate of alternatives that MDOT has identified which would add lanes to both highways.

Explain how the proposed expansion project will impact your life and loved ones. For example:

- Indicate if you have any health concerns, such as a concern that a child's asthma will be worsened by increased vehicle emissions.
- Indicate if your neighborhood is already burdened by other health impacts.
- Describe how the project may negatively impact your property or community spaces you use such as parks, schools, churches, recreation centers.
- Highlight the financial burden of increased water/sewer fees for WSSC customers, taxpayer subsidies for the toll way operators or the tolls for the new lanes, if these are concerns.

Feel free to cite problems highlighted in the National Park Conservation Association's overview ([click here](#)) of the DEIS or raised in oral comments submitted by others at recent hearings ([click here](#)).

Send a copy of your comments to Comptroller Peter Franchot and State Treasurer Nancy Kopp. Ultimately, these officials will vote on whether to allow MDOT to sign an agreement with a contractor to build the project. Send a copy of your comments to Comptroller Franchot at aklase@marylandtaxes.gov and to State Treasurer Kopp at treasurer@treasurer.state.md.us