



THE MARYLAND GENERAL ASSEMBLY
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

November 30, 2021

Gregory Slater, Secretary
Maryland Department of Transportation
7201 Corporate Center Drive
Hanover, MD 21076

Jeffrey T. Folden, Director
I-495 & I-270 P3 Office
707 North Calvert Street
Baltimore, MD 21202

Dear Secretary Slater and Director Folden,

We are reaching out as representatives of District 17 (Rockville and Gaithersburg) to express our continuing concerns regarding the proposed I-495/I-270 P3 project. Over the past several years, we have repeatedly voiced concerns about this project yet they have not been addressed in MDOT's Supplementary Draft Environmental Impact Statement.

The P3 project seems blind to the new reality of commerce and work in light of the pandemic. Telework is here to stay, as demonstrated by the numerous private companies and government agencies that have authorized telework for the foreseeable future and beyond. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, an estimated 37% of U.S. jobs can be performed entirely from home. Prior to the pandemic only 7% of workers teleworked, but that is no longer the case. Just as large employers previously adopted staggered work hours to ease traffic volume, telework has and will continue to have a positive impact on traffic congestion in future years.

Second, MDOT's recently deployed traffic management technology on I-270 will lead to major reductions in travel times over the next twenty years according to MDOT's own travel time matrix tables. For example, ramp metering technology and other recent improvements will reduce travel times for the southbound morning peak hour trip by as much as 40% between various destinations. It is very important to know how well this newly deployed system works before approving the P3 project.

Additionally, the P3 is not going to improve traffic conditions for the vast majority of drivers on I-270. MDOT's own travel time matrix tables show there are no significant time savings for the 85-90% of drivers in the non-toll lanes over the no-build option. For example, a comparison of a daily commute time from I-370 to River Road and back on the non-toll lanes versus the no-build

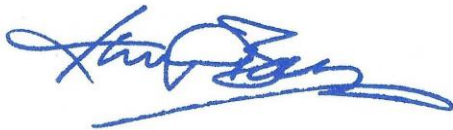
option revealed virtually identical travel times in 2040 (30.5 minutes vs. 30.7 minutes). Moreover, we know from the experience of other highway expansions across the country that induced demand is real and will occur on I-270, leading to further degradations of travel times.

We are also concerned about wasteful spending to demolish and rebuild existing transportation infrastructure should the project progress. I-270 currently has as many as 12 lanes, the same as the New Jersey Turnpike near New York City. In order to accommodate 14 lanes, every interchange of the highway segment in Rockville will have to be rebuilt. Two of the three physical support structures for the interchanges are part of the existing I-270 separator structure for the express/local lanes. Creating the seventh lane in each direction requires these interchange supports to be removed. Rebuilding the interchanges will cause transportation and environmental chaos for Rockville and for I-270, in addition to costing at least hundreds of millions of dollars.

Finally, tolling by the private management consortium is prohibitively expensive. By 2026, it will cost \$50 to go 12 miles. This is not affordable for commuters.

Thank you for your consideration of our concerns. We look forward to your reply on these issues.

Sincerely,



Kumar Barve
Chair, Environment and Transportation Committee
Delegate, District 17

Cheryl Kagan

Cheryl Kagan
Vice Chair, Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee
Senator, District 17



Julie Palakovich Carr
Delegate, District 17