

Testimony by Citizens Against Beltway Expansion (CABE)
Regarding Transportation Agenda Item 19, Public-Private Partnership (P3) Program
Board of Public Works
January 8, 2020
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Thank you for this opportunity to share Citizens Against Beltway Expansion's concerns with the Department's changes to the I-495 and I-270 expansion proposal. I speak on behalf of 1300 civic associations and residents that would be affected by the proposal.

We appreciate the effort made to address some of our issues with I-495 and to improve collaboration with federal, state and local government. Full transparency and collaboration with stakeholders is sound policy and the right and best way to build for long-term congestion relief in Suburban Maryland.

We believe more of both need to be done to avoid the practical and financial failures of comparable P3 tollways in North Carolina, Texas, and other states and also to better protect the interests of Maryland's communities, commuters, environment, and taxpayers.

That's why we urge you to explicitly require MDOT to share its latest traffic and revenue projections, current origin and destination data, toll estimates, and environmental data with the public, General Assembly, and local agencies for independent analysis and verification. The same goes for sharing details of the 2019 American Legion Bridge accord with Virginia. These details should not be hidden from Maryland taxpayers and drivers since we are the ones who will be paying the bills, sitting in traffic, breathing the exhaust, and on the hook if the developer's projections are over-optimistic.

Over-optimism is a real problem with P3 tollways. Independent due diligence is critical especially since it is clear public money will be involved – whether or not it comes from new taxes. Given the track record of P3 tollways, nobody should be in a hurry to sign taxpayers up for a 50-year game of gotcha with a tollway concessionaire.

Second, we are concerned with the pre-mature elimination of mass transit and other options that together promise congestion relief at one tenth the cost of the \$11 billion P3 toll lane proposal.

We therefore ask you to remand the current request to address these issues. Let's get it right now so the taxpayers counting on your promises won't be stuck with an \$11 billion disappointment.

CABE thanks the Board for its work, its serious consideration of this difficult issue, and the time you have given us to share our concerns.

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