

(The Honorable Larry Hogan, Governor of the State of Maryland  
The Honorable Peter Franchot, Comptroller of Maryland  
The Honorable Nancy Kopp, Treasurer of the State of Maryland)  
Board of Public Works  
80 Calvert St.  
Annapolis, MD 21401

April 24, 2017

Dear Mr. or Ms....:

As a member of the Maryland Board of Public Works, you will soon vote on whether to allow the Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) to move forward on a plan to expand I-495 and I-270 by adding two to four toll lanes to each of these highways. I urge you to oppose this proposal as it fails to protect the best interests of Maryland's taxpayers, communities and the environment.

It is premature to approve this project before an environmental impact statement has been conducted to assess how it would affect our air, water and the public health. Before the Board approves this project, it is critical that we understand how it might degrade Sligo Creek, Rock Creek, the Potomac River and, ultimately, the Chesapeake Bay.

It is also important for the Board to ensure that transportation plans are consistent with the need to address climate change. In comments to MDOT, the public expressed strong support for transit solutions to relieve congestion. Yet transit is not part of this plan nor are the addition of new HOV or reverse lanes.

Decades of research on transportation projects show that simply widening highways is not a real solution to congestion. Experience shows that expanding highways increases driving by encouraging people to abandon carpooling and public transit. It also encourages more people to get on the road during rush hour rather than driving during non-rush hour periods. In Northern Virginia, rush hour trips got longer six months after toll lanes opened. The large expansion of I-270, was projected to relieve congestion for 20 years. But after seven years congestion was again a problem.

Because the project would not include access to toll lanes at the New Hampshire Avenue interchange, the project would push more traffic to Route 29 and Connecticut Avenue. This would make congestion on these roads much worse.

The proposal utilizes a public-private partnership (P3) model that has led to very high tolls in other communities, such as Northern Virginia. Yet, MDOT has not analyzed whether a P3 project would be more financially advantageous to Marylanders than conventional financing.

At the very least, it is premature to move forward on this proposal to expand I-495 and I-270. I urge you to oppose it.

Sincerely,