



May 4, 2021

The Honorable Peter V. R. Franchot  
Comptroller of Maryland  
Goldstein Treasury Building  
80 Calvert Street  
Annapolis, MD 21404

RE: I-495 & I-270 Managed Lane Project

Dear Comptroller Franchot:

We are writing to express our strong support for the Maryland Department of Transportation's efforts to move forward with Phase 1 of the Maryland Traffic Relief Plan, which includes replacing the aging American Legion Bridge and improving the heavily congested I-270 corridor.

MDOT's plan to add two new High Occupancy Toll (HOT) Lanes and improve regional transit service in each direction on the American Legion Bridge and I-270 will create a seamless managed lane network between Maryland and Virginia. This Regional Express Lanes Network is one of the Transportation Planning Board's top transportation priorities because it dramatically increases the reliability of our transportation system despite our region's current forecast to gain an additional 1 million jobs and 1.3 million residents by 2045.

Furthermore, we support this forward-thinking, regionally significant project because it will substantially reduce congestion and delays for both free and toll lane users, improve regional transit service, increase carpooling, add new bike and pedestrian connections, strengthen our economy, and create thousands of good-paying jobs.

The congestion relief benefits of this project alone will be transformational for local residents who use the American Legion Bridge and I-270 every day. People driving in the free lanes will save an average of 40 hours per year while toll lane drivers will save an average of 70 hours annually. That means 2-4 more waking days per year for DMV residents to do what they actually want with their lives instead of being stuck in soul crushing traffic.

The HOT Lanes will also incentivize more transit and HOV trips in our region. In Virginia, the I-95 Express Lanes carry more than twice as many people per lane during the morning rush hour and the Virginia Beltway has seen a 550% increase in carpooling since the I-495 Express Lanes opened. Virginia and Maryland have already extensively studied and identified new regional transit service routes using the HOT Lanes to connect important activity centers including Silver Spring, Bethesda, Gaithersburg, Tysons, and Reston. The new managed lanes will expand access to all of these locations via faster and more reliable public transit.

Moreover, this project represents a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to address one of our region's worst bottlenecks while minimizing risk to taxpayers through an innovative P3 approach. In addition to funding design and development of the project, the proposed pre-development agreement would include a commitment of up to \$300 million for transit improvements in the corridor just for Phase 1 South, a new bike

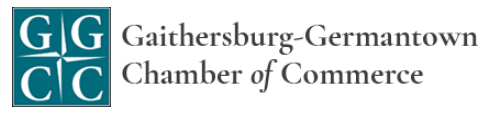
and pedestrian connection between Maryland and Virginia, \$50 million for business and community grants, and \$25 million to support new transportation technology and research in the corridor. This first section of the project would provide an estimated \$3.7 billion boost to our regional economy and provide 7,500 new jobs in construction and related fields. Coming out of a sustained economic downturn, this investment could not come at a better time.

For these reasons, we reiterate our strong support for moving forward now on the pre-development agreement for Phase 1 of the P3 Program. We respectfully urge all Maryland officials to refrain from any legislative or other actions that could delay this project and further complicate an already daunting review process. Important changes in the P3 Program have been made to accommodate local concerns, including focusing the entire procurement effort on Phase 1 and expanding transit access, which both affected Counties support. The benefits of the American Legion Bridge and I-270 improvements have been extensively studied and documented for more than 30 years. Further delay only increases the cost and jeopardizes Maryland's ability to provide long-overdue, cost-effective congestion relief.

Thank you for undertaking pivotal regional transportation improvements that will significantly improve travel, our quality of life and economic opportunities for Maryland residents and the entire DC region.

Sincerely,







**Democratic Business Council of Maryland**  
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- cc:
- The Honorable Larry Hogan, Governor of Maryland
  - The Honorable Nancy Kopp, Treasurer of Maryland
  - Members of the Maryland Congressional Delegation
  - The Honorable Greg Slater, Maryland DOT Secretary
  - The Honorable Stephanie Pollack, Acting Administrator, Federal Highway Administration
  - Members of the Maryland General Assembly
  - Montgomery County, Frederick County and Prince George’s County Executives and Councilmembers