



THE GREATER BETHESDA
CHAMBER of COMMERCE
Smart Business, Bright Future



Allie Williams, IOM, President & CEO
7910 Woodmont Avenue, Suite 1204
Bethesda, MD 20814
T (301) 652-4900 F (301) 657-1973
awilliams@greaterbethesdachamber.org
www.greaterbethesdachamber.org

February 10, 2021

Delegate Kumar P. Barve
Chair, Environment and Transportation Committee
Maryland House of Delegates
Room 251, House Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: HB067 -I-270 AND I-495- I-495 and I-270 Public-Private Partnership - Partnership Agreement - Requirements (Maryland Department of Transportation Promises Act of 2021)

Position: **OPPOSE**

Dear Chairman Barve, Vice Chair Stein and Members of the Committee:

On behalf of our 500-member businesses and more than 45,000 employees in Montgomery County, this statement is in Opposition to **HB067 -I-270 AND I-495- I-495 and I-270 Public-Private Partnership - Partnership Agreement - Requirements.**

This is a moderately revised version of a bill proposed last year that seeks to delay and burden the vital P3 project that is currently underway to provide seriously needed congestion relief to Montgomery County and the Region as a whole. This year, the legislation is proposed as an emergency bill which is highly unnecessary and foreboding. Its status should be downgraded, so that the bill can receive needed scrutiny. There are numerous requirements and obstacles contained within the body of the bill that primarily seek to delay an important economic development project that will provide many needed jobs for the State's post-pandemic economy. A 10% toll revenue requirement does not comport with previously stipulated Board of Public Works conditions, and the requirement for sharing of data is redundant. The bill's requirement for additional studies already underway under the aegis of the NEPA process seeks to unnecessarily delay the effort to allow completion of this important infrastructure project.

The compact which the governors of Maryland and Virginia have affected to rebuild the American Legion Bridge is second to none and offers hope for a brighter economic future for Bethesda, Montgomery County, and the Region. The current P3 project is presently in the procurement phase and would be sorely injured by this nuisance legislation. Any effort to amend the rules that relate to the P3 should be done as part of the ongoing process, rather than trying to dismantle the ongoing design, construction, and procurement process now underway. Any setbacks in the form of nuisance legislation will delay this project which is presently scheduled to begin construction in 2022. Please let go of delaying efforts.

Language included in this bill does not reflect the more than 2-year study of the P3 process, nor the terms of the P3 Program's Request for Proposal. The path toward lasting traffic relief and economic recovery this P3 Program will provide is already too far underway to change the rules in the middle of an active procurement process. Think of your constituents who want this traffic relief because they are plagued with congestion on the beltway an average of 10 hours per day. The cost of congestion adds up to roughly \$2,000 per resident per year. Do you want to own this? Please vote against this bill. We urge you to give an UNFAVORABLE report on this bill. Thank you for your consideration of our remarks.

Sincerely,

Allie Williams
President & CEO