



**MONTGOMERY COUNTY COUNCIL**  
ROCKVILLE, MARYLAND

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PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE  
CHAIR, TRANSPORTATION & ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

**Councilmember Tom Hucker's testimony to Maryland Board of  
Public Works opposing MDOT proposal to widen Beltway and I-270**

June 5, 2019

Good morning, Governor, Comptroller and Treasurer.

For the record, I am Montgomery County Councilmember Tom Hucker, and I chair the Council's Transportation & Environment Committee. I'm here representing Council President Nancy Navarro and the unanimous position of the Montgomery County Council.

I've come to ask the you to defer your decision on the Managed Lanes proposal back to the Department of Transportation and to direct the Department to work with affected local governments to make adjustments to the plan to incorporate their input and win their support.

Governor Hogan, as our Transportation Chair I sincerely want to thank you for the bipartisan leadership you have shown on transportation issues - first by supporting the Purple Line, and later by supporting the historic funding package for WMATA.

The Comptroller, the Treasurer and I were all very vocal supporters of the Purple Line twenty years ago. And at many times we thought it was never going to happen. So it's very, very personally heartening every day when I drive my kids to school past the construction at Purple Line stations every day. That project is going to transform our region for the better, and that's because you saw past the partisanship and supported it on the merits.

And in the same way, you broke a longstanding logjam by supporting dedicated funding for WMATA, something many of us were unsuccessfully pushing for at least ten years ago. You deserve a lot of credit for both those actions.

**But at this point, the managed lanes project does not enjoy the same broad, bipartisan support that had been built behind both the Purple Line and WMATA funding over many years, nor does it enjoy the support of our expert transportation planners as those projects had.**

We all know that at this point the public has not embraced this project as it was drafted. It's true that a 55% majority of Marylanders, in a recent poll, have said they support the project. But a far higher margin, 75% of respondents, fear that the toll lanes would be too expensive to use, 75% are concerned that the toll lanes will fail to reduce congestion, and 80% of Marylanders report being concerned about the destruction of homes. We all know margins that high are unusual in professional surveys - reflecting the broad unease about this project at this point.

**Governor, we are really grateful to you for tackling congestion in our region. I've waited a long time for a Governor to take this on. This should be a **great opportunity**. But at this point, **the MDOT proposal has significant flaws and they're all fixable**. Please understand that we want the attention to congestion relief, but we also have legal and moral obligations to defend our constituents and their local land use decisions.**

**So we are here because we want to work with you to address the shortcomings of MDOT's plan. We want to be engaged in the process, not shut out of it. As folks like to say in Annapolis, the three counties affected by this project want to be at the table, not on the menu.**

**The managed lanes proposal is well-intentioned and has many strong elements, but we're asking you to defer approval today and direct MDOT to include the amendments we sent you earlier this week and win the support of local officials - as has always been done in large transportation projects like the ICC, the Purple Line and the Wilson Bridge.**

And we also strongly believe the State should not solicit proposals before conducting an Environmental Impact Statement and independent fiscal analysis, including the financing mechanism and the range of possible toll levels, and the risks from non-compete clauses and other common problems with P3s. I'm told the University of Maryland has offered the type of independent analysis we should all want to protect taxpayers and build the broader public support that this project needs.

All major projects — but especially one of this historic magnitude, should have these studies conducted before moving forward. Only after such analysis will we know its ramifications for the state budget and our environment for decades to come. And all Marylanders should want bidders to be aware of all those details prior to drafting their solicitations with the most accurate information in order to avoid problems down the road.

For years, we have asked Annapolis for balanced, multi-modal solutions to relieve congestion on our state highways.

No one is more affected by congestion on I-495 and I-270 than we and our constituents are. We know how it wastes our time, how it degrades the quality of life in our counties, how it impedes our economic development.

And that's why, more than most, we also have the expertise — and motivation — to solve it.

**Let me state unequivocally: We are 100 percent for congestion relief.** We have proposed solutions in Priorities Letters and testimony for many years that are all posted on MDOT's website.

Those recommendations are summarized in the plan we sent you, which is more balanced, less disruptive, more protective of the environment and our master plans and — most importantly — more effective at relieving congestion than the current plan.

I brought the map and I'd like to run through the details if time allows.

But Gov. Hogan, your leadership on the Purple Line and on WMATA funding is already transforming our region for the better. You know how to break long standing logjams and solve big problems. So we're simply asking you to work with us to improve this plan to build the public consensus that it needs. **With a few sensible amendments and analysis, you will have a bipartisan transportation trifecta that will be the cornerstone of your legacy.**

Thank you.