

**Lisa B. Choplin, DBIA  
I-495 & I-270 P3 Program Director  
I-495 & I-270 P3 Office  
707 North Calvert Street  
Mail Stop P-601  
Baltimore MD 21202**

**Re: Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the I-495 and I-270 Managed Lanes Project**

Dear Ms. Choplin,

My name is Joseph Jakuta and I live in Mount Rainier, Maryland. I am writing as a resident of Maryland, a father of two young children, a commuter, and a taxpayer.

**I oppose the project and support a no-build option.**

There are numerous problems with this project. Build options fly in the face of what we need to do to reduce emissions in order to combat climate change. Building will result in stranded assets that, given what we are seeing from other transportation public-private partnership projects in Maryland, will wind up with the taxpayers needing to pay the bill. Build options will increase air pollution, which is especially troubling given what we have seen with the impact communities that are exposed to high levels of air pollution have had from Covid-19. Build options will again place burdens on the communities of color that live near to the Beltway, in order to benefit those that live far away and aren't subjected to the air pollution, noise pollution, water pollution, and dangerous vehicles that will be added to their communities. Build options will also place financial burdens on people like me that don't need to drive a car to work, but yet will have to pay increased water bills that won't be borne by the drivers of these lanes.

I am particularly troubled by the impact that this project will likely have on my children, and the other young children in the region. The Draft EIS does not acknowledge the environmental burdens that will be placed on the younger age cohorts. This group is a particularly vulnerable population and we need to make sure these types of projects don't cause irreparable harm to them to benefit others.

Firstly, no consideration was given to the increased carcinogenic construction dust that will be produced during demolition of the lanes. Seven public schools are within 500 meters of the Beltway I-495. The schools will not be able to operate during the demolition phases of the project in order to protect the health of the children. These students are already needing to learn remotely due to the health dangers of Covid-19 and then they will come back and need to uproot their learning environment again. And MDOT could not even analyze this impact in their DEIS.

Secondly, pollution doesn't stop once construction is completed. Numerous pieces of evidence have shown that constructing new lanes leads to induced demand (a concept which MDOT does not consider in their analysis as evidenced in Table 3-33 of Appendix I, which shows the

same vehicle counts being used for all scenarios). This will lead more vehicles on the road and thus greater increases in long term exposure to air pollution. Officials have also implied that a purpose for the expansion is allow for existing lanes to hold more freight trucks. These vehicles are particularly high emitters of fine particulate matter and oxides of nitrogen, and an increase in their use along our highways will be particularly harmful to the young children attending school in close proximity to the Beltway. MDOT did also not explicitly include an increase in fine particulate matter and oxides of nitrogen from an increase in miles from vehicles, especially diesel trucks.

Thirdly, the Washington area continues to violate the health based federal ozone levels, even though they need to demonstrate attainment this year. And now plans are being made to increase the amount of miles traveled by cars and trucks on our roads. This when children are already being exposed to ozone levels near the Beltway that leads to more asthma attacks. Despite reductions in passenger traffic during Covid-19 air quality monitors in Prince George's County are still violating the health-based National Ambient Air Quality Standards. And MDOT could not even analyze this impact in their DEIS.

Lastly, CO<sub>2</sub> concentrations continue to increase every year. The IPCC says that worldwide we need to reach net zero emissions by 2050 and that we need to cut our emissions in half by 2030. Yet each of the build options increases CO<sub>2</sub> emissions in both 2025 and 2040, with the best case scenario increasing CO<sub>2</sub> emissions in 2040 by 0.9%, at a time when we need to be well on our way as a society to net zero emissions (Table 3-39 of Appendix I). When it comes to my five year old and two year old that will be inheriting this world, decisions to add lanes that increase emissions in the short term is beyond irresponsible. MDOT needs to come back with a plan to reduce congestion that fits within the framework that the science shows is necessary in order to stave off the worst of the climate emergency and that decreased CO<sub>2</sub> emissions in the region from vehicle travel by 50%.

If MDOT wanted to issue a serious proposal that takes a lane of the current Beltway away from single passenger vehicle traffic and implements a world class electric Bus Rapid Transit system that should be discussed. It would speed more people along using the current levels of space on the highway. It would be emissions free. It would further encourage switching away from personal fossil-fuel fired polluting vehicles. It would also be a more cost effective solution. MDOT needs to start thinking of the future instead of living in the past and focus their project on clean efficient travel instead of trying to make our children breathe worse air and suffer a worse climate future.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Jeff Jacoby". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Joseph Jakuta  
Proud Father of Two  
Mount Rainier, MD