



August 15, 2016

James F. Ports, Jr.
Deputy Secretary of Operations
Maryland Department of Transportation
7201 Corporate Center Drive
Hanover, Maryland 21076

Dear Mr. Ports,

Following the receipt of your July 28 letter to county leaders, I write to offer the Maryland Association of Counties' aid to the Maryland Department of Transportation in developing a productive process to evaluate major transportation projects. We believe the best way forward on this important process is by working together.

Counties are well aware of the 2016 legislation creating the scoring system for major transportation projects, and joined your Department in raising concerns with that proposal. Through those deliberations, MACo sought to preserve the longstanding and productive process of county priority-setting that has traditionally initiated the Department's considerations. We were pleased with language preserving that process, added to the bill prior to its passage.

While your Department is now amidst its implementation of the law as you understand it, we know you have received acute concerns from county officials regarding their ability to comply with the short-term requests for supporting information and analysis. We remain optimistic that the days ahead will allow a practical solution to the issues at hand – one that avoids seeing worthy projects becoming “de-funded.”

We write here to focus on the months ahead – where the Department is charged by the legislation to create its implementing regulations. We believe that a dialogue involving public works and transportation officials and other leaders at the county level could be a great asset to the Department's deliberations. We would welcome the opportunity to coordinate such an effort.

We look forward to seeing you, the Secretary, and other Department leaders at the upcoming MACo conference. We expect that some face-to-face discussion of these issues may be mutually beneficial in charting both the short term, and longer term, processes ahead.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John Barr". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "J" and "B".

John Barr
President
Maryland Association of Counties

CC: Secretary Pete K. Rahn
Deputy Chief of Staff Jeannie Haddaway-Riccio
The Honorable Senator Edward Kasemeyer
The Honorable Delegate Maggie McIntosh
County chief elected officials