

shall take effect July 1, 2005 January 1, 2006. Section 2 of this Act shall remain in effect for a period of 3 years and, at the end of December 31, 2008, with no further action required by the General Assembly, Section 2 of this Act shall be abrogated and of no further force and effect.

May 20, 2005

The Honorable Thomas V. Mike Miller, Jr.
President of the Senate
State House
Annapolis, MD 21401

Dear Mr. President:

In accordance with Article II, Section 17 of the Maryland Constitution, today I have vetoed Senate Bill 281 – *Commission to Study Southern Maryland Transportation Needs*.

Senate Bill 281 would establish a 21 member Commission to Study Southern Maryland's Transportation Needs. The Commission would report its findings November 1, 2006. The Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) opposed the bill during the hearings in the House of Delegates and the Senate.

MDOT has a process for identifying priorities in local jurisdictions throughout the State. The Consolidated Transportation Program is a well-established process for identifying transportation needs based on extensive input from local stakeholders. Further, the Maryland Transit Administration (MTA) has conducted studies on the transportation needs of Southern Maryland. MTA has focused on the development of four "park & ride" facilities and has two others in planning/negotiating phase.

Implementation of Senate Bill 281 would cost at least \$733,000 for administrative staffing and traffic and other studies. These funds would have to be diverted from the MTA and State Highway Administration (SHA) projects throughout the State. Further, Senate Bill 281 would require the diversion of staff resources from SHA and MTA Planning Departments; some of whom are currently dedicated to Southern Maryland projects.

The bill is unclear as to the level of detail the commission would undertake in its reviews of existing plans, traffic assessments, strategy development, funding recommendations, and detailed transit analyses (including Light Rail/Bus Rapid Transit alignments). The bill does mandate, however, the commission to study and make recommendations regarding traffic congestion on several State highways, roadway improvements, and strategies to reduce traffic congestion. This mandate would necessitate interchange studies as well as other data gathering efforts. An estimate of \$733,000 is conservative if these studies would require project planning.

Finally, this commission duplicates efforts being handled by way of other existing planning studies and existing organizations:

US 301 Southern Corridor Transportation Study (MDOT has incurred costs of approximately \$982,000 for this study alone)
Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments