

COUNTY COUNCIL OF ANNE ARUNDEL COUNTY, MARYLAND

Legislative Session 2021, Legislative Day No. 18

Resolution No. 49-21

Introduced by Ms. Fiedler

By the County Council, September 20, 2021

1 RESOLUTION in support of a replacement bridge at the current crossing of the
2 William Preston Lane Jr. Memorial Bridge otherwise known as the Chesapeake Bay Bridge

3
4 WHEREAS, the iconic Chesapeake Bay Bridge (the “Bay Bridge”) connects
5 Maryland’s Eastern Shore with its Western Shore, between Stevensville in Queen
6 Anne’s County and Annapolis in Anne Arundel County; and

7
8 WHEREAS, the original two-lane span opened in 1952 as the world’s longest
9 continuous over-water steel structure and a parallel span was added in 1973, and
10 these two spans are the Bay Bridge in place today; and

11
12 WHEREAS, the Bay Bridge is situated along a vital, heavily traveled link of the
13 US 50/301 corridor that extends from I-97 to MD 404, and it connects businesses,
14 healthcare, entertainment, and families of both Maryland shores and provides the
15 sole direct connection between recreational and ocean regions on Maryland’s
16 Eastern Shore with the metropolitan areas of Baltimore, Annapolis and
17 Washington, D.C.; and

18
19 WHEREAS, the Bay Bridge is owned, operated, and maintained by the Maryland
20 Transportation Authority (the “MDTA”) in its modern day construct as a dual 4.3-
21 mile span with a three-lane westbound span and a two-lane eastbound span; and

22
23 WHEREAS, the three-lane span can be adjusted to compensate for traffic demands
24 associated with periods of congestion using “contraflow” to reverse traffic flow
25 during peak travel periods and is one of the longest sections of contraflow used in
26 the country; and

27
28 WHEREAS, the five lanes of the Bay Bridge that currently cross the Chesapeake
29 Bay have not been adequate to effectively manage peak period traffic for many
30 years; and

31
32 WHEREAS, the approaching roadway segments along US 50/301 consist of six
33 lanes, which are geometrically incompatible with the five lanes crossing the Bay;
34 and

35
36 WHEREAS, contraflow is used daily in an attempt to correct this incompatibility,
37 but congestion and backups have now become routine in both directions; and

1 WHEREAS, over the last 30 years Maryland and Delaware have invested over a
2 billion dollars completing numerous roadway improvement projects in the region,
3 including Reach-the-Beach, additional lanes along MD Route 2, the addition of I-
4 97, upgrades to MD Route 404, and the Middletown Delaware bypass; and

5
6 WHEREAS, all these corridors contribute to traffic crossing the same five lanes of
7 the Bay Bridge in place since 1973; and

8
9 WHEREAS, the existing bridges were designed for a 50-year life, and with the east
10 bound span now nearly 70 years old, and the west bound span now nearly 50 years
11 old, maintenance needs and functional traffic management have become more
12 challenging and expensive as the bridges age beyond the original design intent, and
13 future maintenance projects will have a significant, detrimental impact on available
14 bridge capacity and operations; and

15
16 WHEREAS, in 2015, the “US 50/301 William Preston Lane Jr. Memorial (Bay)
17 Bridge Life Cycle Cost Analysis”¹ identified maintenance and rehabilitation costs
18 for the existing bridges to be \$3.25 billion through 2065; and

19
20 WHEREAS, all travelers and commerce must go through this corridor to cross the
21 Chesapeake Bay in Maryland; and

22
23 WHEREAS, the lack of any alternative routes in this corridor result in backups on
24 both the mainline corridor and along all parallel community roads which
25 dramatically impacts the health, safety, livability, and economy of the communities
26 located near the passage and along the US 50/301 corridor on both sides of the
27 Chesapeake Bay; and

28
29 WHEREAS, the traffic impacts are significant and disruptive to community quality
30 of life and ability to access routine essential services, including, emergency
31 services, patient transport, fire response, schools, and both local and regional
32 economy; and

33
34 WHEREAS, the MDTA accurately predicted average Summer daily traffic volume
35 forecasts of 100,000 vehicles per day by 2020, that are now being realized, along
36 with future continuing trends of over 110,000 vehicles per day resulting in projected
37 7-mile backups and seven hours of delay time by 2030 if the capacity shortfall at
38 the Bay Bridge is not addressed promptly; and

39
40 WHEREAS, the only viable solution to eliminate the bottleneck caused by the Bay
41 Bridge capacity constriction is to expeditiously align previous transportation
42 investments in other route improvements with a new replacement bridge and
43 functional mainline approach roadways that are compatible and have adequate
44 capacity to safely move traffic on the US 50/301 corridor; and

¹ Report available at
https://mdta.maryland.gov/sites/default/files/Files/blogs/Bay_Bridge_LCCA_Report_12-2015.pdf.

1 WHEREAS, in recent years, Governor Lawrence L. Hogan has worked diligently
2 to identify a solution that will maximize congestion relief and minimize the
3 environmental impact; and
4

5 WHEREAS, Governor Hogan has dedicated countless resources and efforts to
6 provide traffic relief in Maryland for families, commuters, and businesses and has
7 directed improvements at the Bay Bridge to reduce current congestion and
8 minimize delays related to required maintenance including, expediting re-decking
9 on the westbound span, installing an electronic toll collection system, removing
10 physical toll booths, and providing free “E-ZPass” transponders to citizens while
11 keeping tolls at historically low levels; and
12

13 WHEREAS, on August 30, 2016, Governor Hogan announced \$5 million in
14 funding for the MDTA to conduct a Tier 1 Bay Crossing Study; and
15

16 WHEREAS, the Chesapeake Bay Crossing Study: Tier 1 NEPA (“Bay Crossing
17 Study”) is a National Environmental Policy Act (“NEPA”) study being conducted
18 with public and agency involvement to result in the identification of a preferred
19 corridor alternative to provide adequate capacity, dependable and reliable travel
20 times, and flexibility to maintenance and incident management in a safe manner at
21 the Bay Bridge with the evaluation of its financial feasibility, traffic alleviation and
22 environmental analyses; and
23

24 WHEREAS, in February of 2021, the MDTA, in cooperation with the Federal
25 Highway Administration (the “FHWA”), issued a Tier 1 Draft Environmental
26 Impact Statement for the Bay Crossing Study; and
27

28 WHEREAS, the FHWA and the MDTA have announced their intention to issue a
29 combined Tier 1 Final Environmental Impact Statement and Record of Decision
30 sometime in the Winter of 2021-2022; and
31

32 WHEREAS, following the completion of the Tier 1 study, a more extensive and
33 detailed Tier 2 study must be done to thoroughly assess the preferred corridor
34 alternative identified in the Tier 1 study as well as the potential environmental
35 impacts, and possibly advance a new replacement bridge and approach highway or
36 roads; and
37

38 WHEREAS, communities in both Anne Arundel and Queen Anne’s Counties will
39 continue to experience the impacts of increased traffic volume and delays during
40 the multi-year Tier 2 process, and as the current Bay Bridge remains in a constant
41 state of maintenance and rehabilitation; and
42

43 WHEREAS, by Resolution No. 32-21 the addition of a third span to the existing
44 Bay Bridge was opposed, that opposition still stands, and the construction of a new
45 replacement Bay Bridge is now supported; and
46

47 WHEREAS, it is imperative the Tier 2 Environmental Impact Statement be funded
48 and begin immediately, and all efforts be made to expedite the lengthy and
49 extensive Federal process; now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved by the County Council of Anne Arundel County, Maryland, That it hereby*
2 finds that the best solution to maintain forward progress, support the investments already
3 made along the US Route 50/301 corridor, specifically from I-97 to MD 404, and address
4 the existing and future traffic capacity shortfalls is to replace the current two spans of the
5 Chesapeake Bay Bridge with a single new replacement bridge, constructed at the same
6 location, that includes a minimum of eight travel lanes to provide adequate capacity and
7 dependable and reliable travel times; and be it further

8
9 *Resolved, That the County Council hereby requests that the Tier 1 Chesapeake Bay*
10 Crossing Study be concluded, and that sufficient resources be allocated for the Tier 2
11 Chesapeake Bay Crossing Study; and be it further

12
13 *Resolved, that this Resolution is contingent upon the Board of County Commissioners*
14 of Queen Anne’s County, Maryland adopting a resolution that is substantially the same as
15 this Resolution at their next meeting, and, if the Board of County Commissioners of Queen
16 Anne’s County does not adopt a resolution that is substantially the same as this Resolution
17 at their next meeting, then this Resolution shall be considered null and void without further
18 action of the County Council; and be it further

19
20 *Resolved, That a copy of this Resolution be sent to the Board of County Commissioners*
21 of Queen Anne’s County for further action.