

Bay Bridge Reconstruction Advisory Group (BBRAG)

January 7, 2026

The Honorable Wes Moore, Governor,
100 State Circle,
Annapolis, Maryland 21401-1925

Dear Governor Moore,

The Bay Bridge Reconstruction Advisory Board BBRAG) wishes to go on record in support of Alternative C as the Recommended Preferred Alternative for the Chesapeake Bay Crossing Study: Tier 2 NEPA. The BBRAG is an advisory group of citizens and elected and appointed officials who advise the MDTA on reconstruction, maintenance and traffic issues surrounding the Bay Bridge from a community perspective from both sides of the Bay. As Maryland's only crossing of the Chesapeake Bay, the Bay Bridge is a critical infrastructure link in the State's regional transportation system. It is vital in supporting the diverse regional economy and the social and cultural life of Maryland's Eastern Shore and the extended Delmarva Peninsula.

Recent years have shown that as the populations of Anne Arundel and Queen Anne's County have grown, along with the entire Eastern Shore, the current Bay Bridge capacity simply does not accommodate the increasing traffic volumes. The growing popularity of recreation on Delmarva has led to summer weekend queues that can extend greater than five miles with delays lasting as long as eight hours. Congestion also increases during routine or emergency maintenance work, adverse weather conditions, and emergency incidents. The increasingly negative impact of Bay Bridge related traffic issues has led to serious reductions in mobility, reliable access to employment, recreation, and general human activity. This has resulted in an overall degradation in the quality of life for local residents and visitors from near and far, with negative impacts on the environment and the economy. And these are the "good old days". As growth continues in our general area, the situation will only continue to get worse.

MDTA has implemented numerous creative measures to try to alleviate traffic congestion and improve safety. These have included use of "contraflow", two-way operations to borrow a lane from the Westbound Bridge to accommodate eastbound traffic demand – not available during adverse weather conditions. They have also included scheduled ramp closures by SHA on both sides of the Bay to help alleviate back road gridlock and eliminate bottleneck impacts close to the Bridge. These measures are appreciated but are limited as long term solutions. New bridges, with greater capacity, appear to be the only answer. To address this longterm challenge MDTA and the Federal Highway administration have performed extensive studies and analyses of various solutions. Included in this effort, there have been extensive public, stakeholder, agency and BBRAG engagements to review considerable input that has helped determine the recommendation. This effort has led to the Recommended Preferred Alternative (RPA) - Alternative C.

Essentially, Alternative C includes two new spans, each with four lanes, three more lanes than the current bridge. It would meet the need for the necessary current and projected capacity, removing the bottlenecks of restricted capacity. It would also significantly enhance public safety by reducing the need for two-way operations and providing full shoulders for maintenance activities and emergencies. The detailed plan includes building a new eastbound span directly south of the existing eastbound span, then removing the old eastbound span. Then the new westbound span would be built between the existing spans. The old westbound span would then be removed after the new span opens.

The reported benefits make sense. The ultimate cost is lower than the other alternatives considered. There would be lower negative environmental impacts than the other alternatives. Most notably, focusing on the south side of the current span will avoid considerable natural parkland impact on the north side on both sides of the Bay. Although it will be a tight squeeze on Kent Island between the existing Rt. 50 corridor and the Bay Bridge / Pier One Marina commercial and residential complex. The major challenge of Alternative C may be the Rt. 50 corridor on both sides of the Bay remaining at 3 lanes in each direction to within about a half a mile from the new bridge. There will likely be necessary infrastructure upgrades in both Anne Arundel and Queen Anne's County to help facilitate the increased traffic.

In addition to improved traffic capacity, a compelling reason to move forward with the new bridge is the nightmare of the Key Bridge disaster, with a similar set of vulnerabilities as the Bay Bridge. The new spans will not only provide the significant economic benefit of enhanced access to the port of Baltimore by greater height requirements to meet future worldwide shipping needs. They will be designed to afford greater strength and pier protection. "Higher, wider, stronger" make good sense to us.

The BBRAG therefore stands in support of Alternative C and urges FHWA to move forward with approval.