

# News Release

## Statement of Comptroller Peter Franchot on the American Legion Bridge/I-270 Public-Private Partnership (P3) Pre-Development Contract Vote

*Franchot reaffirms MDOT's commitments to transit investment, complete environmental review, partnering with labor advocates, financial accountability and more*

**ANNAPOLIS, Md. (August 11, 2021)** - *"After months of conversations with stakeholders from both sides of this project and hearing from tens of thousands of Marylanders, today I voted to advance this project to the planning and design phase so that we may continue to explore the viability of this proposal to deliver traffic congestion relief in the National Capital Region. It is my constitutional duty as Comptroller to ensure this project which, even in its significantly scaled back current form, remains one of the largest P3 projects in the nation, is in the best interest of Maryland's taxpayers, as well as the State's financial wellbeing.*

*"Today, I reconfirmed the Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) will fulfill the commitments I secured, which include guarantees that:*

- no construction award will be presented to the Board next year until the completion of all federal, state and local environmental impact studies and permits required;*
- no homes will be taken before the construction contract is awarded;*
- a portion of the toll revenue be directly invested into local transit programs for Montgomery and Frederick counties, and;*

- *carpools and buses will be able to use the express toll lanes for free. In addition, MDOT completed a feasibility study of a monorail system for the I-270 corridor, which was a commitment made to the Board in January 2020.*

*“One of the most critical components of this project is a written commitment from MDOT and the selected vendor, Accelerate Maryland Partners, that this unprecedented project will be built by a diversified workpool. This guarantees good-paying jobs for union workers, minority-owned, women-owned, disadvantaged, and small business owners, as well as non-union shops. Each of them will have a seat at this very large table, paving the way for new family-supporting jobs that will lift thousands of families into the middle class by offering them paths to home ownership, good health coverage and a financially secure retirement.*

*“I look forward to reviewing the final labor agreement that is signed by these stakeholders before the final construction award is presented to the Board next year. This goal simply must be reached.*

*“And finally, I voted to advance this project to its next phase after being reassured that Maryland’s financial interests are protected. Secretary Slater today confirmed his prior commitment to the Board and the General Assembly that MDOT will complete a Value for Money Analysis before next year’s final construction contract is presented. In addition, Secretary Slater confirmed the Maryland Transportation Authority Board will retain control over toll rates throughout the duration of the contract term to best protect consumers. Again, these components are assurances that our taxpayers deserve, and must receive, before any ground is broken on this project.*

*“As a Montgomery County resident of more than 40 years, I know firsthand how the traffic congestion in the D.C. Metro area impacts the quality of life of our residents. We may not all agree on the solutions, but we all agree this is a significant problem that must be addressed.*

*“Throughout my career in public service, both as a legislator and now as comptroller, I have and will continue to be a strong proponent, advocate and supporter of mass transit.*

*“I worked hard to secure hundreds of millions of dollars in direct investments into local transit programs for impacted jurisdictions as a condition of this project, and I continue to be a strong proponent of the Purple Line and other mass rail transit programs across the State.*

*“I also ensured that carpools and buses will be able to use the toll lanes without paying a single cent. The scaling of bus infrastructure via free tolls is an immediate way to make mass transit a more convenient, reliable and rapid means of transportation for Marylanders.*

*“I too am tremendously concerned about climate change and its short- and long-term impact on our state, our country and our planet.*

*“That’s why significant environmental requirements, including the NEPA review and obtaining a myriad of federal, state, and local permits, must be met prior to the construction contract being brought back to the Board.*

*“I am also encouraged by the recent announcement from President Biden and America’s auto manufacturers that 50 percent of new car sales will be electric by 2030. I am confident that most of the cars using these highways will be electric and will help us further reduce carbon emissions.*

*“We can and must move forward with pragmatic solutions to address the traffic congestion that not only paralyzes our region on a daily basis, but also negatively impacts our ability to attract critically needed economic investment in our State.*

*“I sincerely appreciate Secretary Slater’s commitment to meet these conditions, as well as his pledge to continue working with local elected officials, residents, community associations, labor advocates and nonprofit organizations to minimize the impact of this construction as much as possible.*

*“Today’s vote does not grant final approval for this project. There are still many boxes to check before construction begins. But doing nothing and kicking the can further down the road is not an option. As the planning and design phase unfolds, and ahead of any potential construction award being presented to the Board, I will -- as I have over the past 18 months -- continue to listen to all sides of this issue and hold MDOT and its selected vendors accountable to their commitments to the people and the State of Maryland.”*

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**MEDIA CONTACTS: Susan O'Brien - [sobrien@marylandtaxes.gov](mailto:sobrien@marylandtaxes.gov)  
Alan Brody - [abrody@marylandtaxes.gov](mailto:abrody@marylandtaxes.gov)**

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