



March 18, 2009

Testimony in Support of House Bill 27 & Senate Bill 753  
Intercounty Connector - Elimination of Funding  
Appropriations Committee

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**Position - Support**

Good afternoon, my name is Andrew Galli, I'm the Maryland Program Coordinator for Clean Water Action. The Intercounty Connector (ICC) has been in the planning process since the 1950's; since before Clean Water Action got its start in 1972. Since then, at least the 1980s, we've been opposed to building a highway between Interstates 95 and 270 for the same reason that we are against sprawl-encouraging road projects throughout the United States. Building a new highway doesn't reduce traffic congestion, it makes it worse. I-95, 495, and 270 are current examples of the failure of highways to cure congestion in the Maryland suburbs, and members of this Committee are familiar with other examples throughout the state.

Much of the environmental community has also been working to address climate change since the 1980's, which adds reasons to oppose the ICC. Planning to facilitate additional vehicle mile trips (vmts) in the coming years is the opposite direction of where Maryland climate policy should direct the state. Maryland needs to increase investment in mass transit, transit-oriented development and revitalizing older communities. Marylanders have known this since the 1980's, which is why so much time was spent addressing the issues of growth under Governor Parris Glendening, and why those concerned about natural resources were so relieved when the ICC project was killed under his leadership.

The fact that the ICC has been revived by Governor Robert Ehrlich and is still being funded is astonishing. It is difficult or impossible to quantify the cost of going forward with construction of the ICC for regional watersheds. The ICC will generate at least 700 million miles of new driving per year, will likely induce 20,000 thousands of acres of sprawl, while damaging some of the healthiest headwater streams in the region, with damaging effects on Rock Creek, the Anacostia River and other tributaries



of the Potomac River and the Chesapeake Bay. Montgomery and Prince George's County have devoted significant resources to protecting forests, wetlands and parklands, and the continued construction of the ICC undermines those investments. State officials have stated that building the ICC will somehow improve environmental conditions, or even "help heal a river."

The State's storm water plans for the project are untested in our region, likely to fail and harm the streams, difficult or impossible to monitor, and expensive, difficult and possibly impossible to maintain or repair. Even if the stormwater management work as well as the State Highway Administration assumes, it will not handle large storms, such as we've experienced in recent years, and as are predicted to increase by climate change modeling.

One of Clean Water Action's themes is "we all live downstream." The impacts on communities downstream of the ICC corridor are likely to experience increased flooding, stream bank erosion, pipe breaks and raw sewage spills. It seems clear that this is already being experienced during the initial segment construction. Regardless of the amount of mitigation and stewardship built into the ICC budget, it can never take into account the associated sprawl development that will be encouraged by the completion of the ICC.

Finally, there is a tremendous opportunity cost of spending transportation dollars on a new toll road instead of investing in repairing and upgrading our existing road infrastructure. Throughout Maryland, waterways could be better restored and protected by improving stormwater management and reducing the amount of pollution runoff.

It is not too late. Putting the brakes on the ICC will give us an opportunity to review Maryland transportation policy and implement a 21<sup>st</sup> Century solution that protects and restores the state's waterways, improves the quality of life and helps meet greenhouse gas emission reduction goals.

Thanks for hearing this testimony, and please vote favorably on House Bill 27 and Senate Bill 753.

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