

Ten Very Good Reasons the ICC Should Be Stopped Now

– A Fact Sheet from the Campaign to Stop the ICC –

The InterCounty Connector (ICC or I-370) is a proposed 19-mile, \$3 billion interstate-scale toll road that would run from I-270 near Gaithersburg to Route 1 near Laurel. The ICC would be six to eight lanes wide where it cuts communities in half and 10 to 12 lanes wide near interchanges with other roads. It would also be part of sprawling, destructive Outer Beltway that the highway agencies are trying to build piece by piece. Federal environmental agencies rejected the ICC twice – in the 1980s and 1990s – because it would severely damage or destroy parks and communities, forests, wetlands and streams. From 2003 to 2006, the Bush and Ehrlich administrations wasted \$30 million ramming the ICC through a deeply flawed, fast-tracked environmental review.

The ICC..... It's Climate Change

State and federal studies show that the ICC would sharply increase automobile use, trigger thousands of acres of sprawl development, and increase air pollutant emissions. Increased auto use triggered by the ICC would wipe out most or all of the greenhouse gas emission reductions expected under the Clean Cars Bill recently passed by the Maryland General Assembly, and studies indicate that even the Clean Cars Bill will not reduce future emissions below current levels if we do not curb growth in auto use. Doesn't that just burn you up?

Maryland's Own Big Dig -- The Three-Billion-Dollar Boondoggle

The ICC's would cost more than \$3 billion -- nearly \$180 million per mile -- and might be the most expensive transportation project in Maryland history. Mile-for-mile, it might be one of the most expensive highway projects in U.S. history.

Three transportation agency studies in 10 years have shown that the ICC would provide no congestion relief to the Washington Capital Beltway, I-270, I-95 or most local roads. In fact, the ICC would increase traffic on multiple major commuter routes and on stretches of the Beltway. ICC = Intercounty Congestor.

That Giant Sucking Sound,,,, and a Mountain of Debt

In addition to draining \$265 million from Maryland's General Fund and \$180 from our Transportation Trust Fund, the ICC would saddle the state with massive, potentially risky public debt. The Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) plans to mortgage our transportation future by issuing almost \$2 billion in public debt for the ICC, with perhaps \$1 billion in interest to be paid on that debt. The ICC bonds would consume a significant portion of the debt's legal debt capacity, and could jeopardize Maryland's ability to invest in schools and other capital projects.

The ICC.... That's All Folks!

Building the ICC would also jeopardize Maryland's ability to afford essential road and bridge maintenance and urgently needed transit projects such as the Purple Line in Montgomery and Prince George's counties, the Red and Green lines in Baltimore City, the Corridor Cities Transitway in Montgomery County and others. Maryland Secretary of Transportation John Porcari has stated on the one hand that the state has no money for major new capital projects, and on the other hand that the state can afford the ICC. Connect the dots.... then tell MDOT to drop the ICC.

Another Nail in the Bay's Coffin

The ICC would devastate the headwaters of Rock Creek and the Anacostia River, and would deeply undermine decades-long efforts to restore the Anacostia, the lower Potomac and the Chesapeake Bay. The State Highway Administration plans to clear cut nearly 1000 acres of mature forest, bulldoze precious wetlands, flatten hill peaks in forested stream valleys, damage some of the healthiest streams in the region, and wipe out some of the region's best remaining natural habitat. ICC = Intercounty Clear Cut.

Speaking of Coughin'.... When You Can't Breathe

The ICC poses a grave threat to public health. The State Highway Administration plans to ram this six-lane interstate truck route through dozens of residential communities, but has refused to assess the impacts of toxic and carcinogenic car and truck emissions on nearby communities. The ICC would pass within 60 meters of Charles Drew Elementary School's playing fields. It would also pass very close to parks, day care centers and a large senior community. It would pass so close to homes that MDOT is aggressively trying to "acquire" the backyards of hundreds of home owners. A large and growing mountain of studies clearly link automobile emissions to death and disease. The Baltimore and Washington regions have some of the nation's worst air quality and fail to meet federal clean air standards for ground-level ozone (a major constituent of smog) and fine particulates. They also have some of the nation's highest concentrations of toxic and air carcinogenic air pollution generated by cars and trucks.

Less Damaging, Less Expensive Alternatives Exist

In the past six years, an agency study and a more recent study by nonprofit environmental and transportation groups have shown that alternatives that reduce sprawl, balance jobs and housing, and improve public transit would provide more transportation choices to more people, and meet many of the region's transportation needs as well as or better than the ICC and Outer Beltway. These alternatives would cause far less damage, and cost far less, than the ICC. The Bush and Ehrlich administrations refused to study these types of alternatives. Instead, they tried to ram the ICC through a deeply flawed, fast-tracked approval.

A Developer Boondoggle and a Toll Truckway That Few Commuters Could Afford

MDOT plans to build the ICC as a toll road, and currently estimates that a commuter making a full round-trip would pay more than \$7 each day to use the ICC. That translates to nearly \$2000 per year. At least one study has found that few less-affluent commuters could afford to use the ICC. And add to those tolls the hard-hitting costs of owning and driving a car.

For more information on how much owning and driving a car costs families, read *Driven to Spend*, published by the Surface Transportation Policy Project: www.transact.org

Deepening the Divide in a Region Already Divided

A Region Divided, published by the Brookings Institution, found that high-paying jobs and public investments have tended to go to the Washington region's suburbs and to areas in the region's western half, short-changing communities the District of Columbia (especially in the eastern part of the city), the inner suburbs and Prince George's County. The ICC and the Outer Beltway would widen this regional divide, forcing residents of the region's east to continue making long auto commutes to the I-270 and Dulles corridors.

The Bush and Ehrlich Administrations Violated Many Environmental Laws

In refusing to consider less damaging alternatives and to assess the ICC's full impacts, the Bush and Ehrlich administrations violated numerous state and federal environmental and public health laws. They also denied the public, the directly threatened communities, and elected officials their rights to have a fully informed say on this destructive, wasteful project. That is why environmental organizations and Maryland residents have taken the highway agencies to court.

Call and Write Governor O'Malley. Urge Him to Drop This Destructive Boondoggle.

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For more information see <http://maryland.sierraclub.org>

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