

# BOARD OF GARRETT COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

## PUBLIC MEETING

### Monday, January 3, 2022

Meeting was also Live Streamed at <https://www.facebook.com/garrettcountygovernment/>

#### IN ATTENDANCE

Chairman Paul C. Edwards  
Commissioner James C. Hinebaugh  
Commissioner S. Larry Tichnell  
  
County Administrator Kevin G. Null

#### ADMINISTRATIVE SESSION

1. Mr. Null reviewed a number of administrative, non-privileged personnel, and managerial matters under his authority and jurisdiction with the Board of County Commissioners.

#### CALL TO ORDER OF PUBLIC SESSION at 4:00 PM

#### PRAYER & PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE – Invocation by Commissioner Tichnell

#### PUBLIC SESSION

1. Mr. Null indicated there was no addition or deletion to the Public Meeting Agenda. The Board of County Commissioners, on a motion by Commissioner Hinebaugh, which was seconded by Commissioner Tichnell, and made unanimous by Chairman Edwards, approved the Public Meeting Agenda for January 3, 2022.
2. The Board of County Commissioners, on a motion by Commissioner Tichnell, which was seconded by Commissioner Hinebaugh, and made unanimous by Chairman Edwards, approved the Public Meeting Minutes of December 21, 2021.
3. **Update on County Response to COVID-19:**
  - ❖ 7–Day Positivity Rate 15.1% compared to the State rate of 29%
  - ❖ Case rate of 74/100,000 compared to the State rate of 200/100,000
  - ❖ County vaccination rate 53.4%
  - ❖ Concerns for limited staffing of health care workers due to exposure and quarantine.
  - ❖ Face Coverings required in all State facilities
4. **Introduction – Garrett County Search & Rescue Team**

Garrett County Department of Emergency Services Director John Frank introduced the newly formed Garrett County Search and Rescue Team. The County-wide team is housed at Bittinger Fire Department and is the third specialized team joining the Hazmat Unit and Swift Water Rescue Team.
5. **Resolution – Support for the Replacement of Chesapeake Bay Bridge at the current location.**

Our friends in Queen Anne’s County have advocated for a replacement or new Chesapeake Bay Bridge to be located in its current location and have requested support from all counties in the state.

The Board of County Commissioners, on a motion by Commissioner Tichnell, which was seconded by Commissioner Hinebaugh, and made unanimous by Chairman Edwards, fully endorsed this request by resolution. (Attached)

6. **PUBLIC COMMENTARY:** None

7. **ANNOUNCEMENTS:** The Board of Garrett County Commissioners announced that the next Public Meeting will be held on Tuesday, January 18, 2022, at 4:00 p.m. at the Garrett County Courthouse.

**ADJOURNMENT:** The Board of County Commissioners, on a motion by Commissioner Tichnell, which was seconded by Commissioner Hinebaugh, and made unanimous by Chairman Edwards, adjourned the Public Meeting at 4:21 P.M.

**Attest:**

**By Order of the Board,**

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**KEVIN G. NULL**  
County Administrator

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**PAUL C. EDWARDS**, Chairman  
Board of County Commissioners

# CHESAPEAKE BAY BRIDGE REPLACEMENT RESOLUTION

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

RESOLVED by the Board of County Commissioners of Garrett County, Maryland, That it hereby finds that the best solution to maintain forward progress, support the investments already made along the US Route 50/301 corridor, specifically from I-97 to MD 404, and address the existing and future traffic capacity shortfalls is to

replace the current two spans of the Chesapeake Bay Bridge with a single new replacement bridge, constructed at the same location, that includes a minimum of eight travel lanes to provide adequate capacity and dependable and reliable travel times; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution be sent to the Board of County Commissioners of Queen Anne's County for further action.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS HEREBY SUPPORTS THE REPLACEMENT OF THE CHESAPEAKE BAY BRIDGE AND REQUESTS THAT THE TIER 1 CHESAPEAKE BAY CROSSING STUDY BE CONCLUDED, AND THAT SUFFICIENT RESOURCES BE ALLOCATED FOR THE TIER 2 CHESAPEAKE BAY CROSSING STUDY**

Adopted the 3<sup>rd</sup> day of January 2022 by the Board of County Commissioners of Garrett County.

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**PAUL C. EDWARDS**  
Chairman

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**JAMES C. HINEBAUGH, JR.**  
Commissioner

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**S. LARRY TICHNELL**  
Commissioner

Witness:

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**KEVIN G. NULL**  
County Administrator