

## FACT-CHECKING WASHINGTON POST EDITORIAL ON COUNTY CHOICE

By Ben Ross, Chair of the Maryland Transit Opportunities Coalition

Just one week after the toll road county consent bill was introduced, and before any hearings on it, the *Washington Post* devoted the entirety of a fact-challenged [editorial](#) to denouncing SB229/HB292. The *Post* hasn't even mentioned the bill in a news story yet.

To point out the most obvious false and misleading assertions in this piece -- some so obvious they are fun [see quotes from the editorial, with rebuttal in green]:

- 1) "...the bogus argument that Eastern Shore counties have had that prerogative [for decades](#); in fact, traffic volumes are light on the Eastern Shore..." *Has anyone on the Post ever driven on the Bay Bridge or US 50 on a summer weekend?*  
"...and no toll roads have been proposed there in recent memory." *How about that third Bay Bridge?*
- 2) "Had localities been so empowered in the 1950s and '60s, it's unlikely the federal interstate highway system would exist today." *Were it not for local resistance in the 1960s and 1970s, Washington and Baltimore would be crisscrossed by interstate highways.*
- 3) "...private firms... would pick up the tab and take the risk." *The Board of Public Works voted on January 8 to authorize "sharing of risks... to provide an offeror confidence..."*
- 4) "[6 in 10 Montgomery residents](#) favor the toll road plan. And while backing in Prince George's is less robust — just less than 50 percent of respondents there supported the idea in a poll last year" *That Post poll was taken in May of last year. The Post took [another poll](#) in October and found majority opinion in the DC suburbs had turned against the toll lanes. In the more recent poll, the lanes were favored by only 49-44 in Montgomery and opposed by an overwhelming 39-59 margin in Prince George's.*
- 5) " Mr. Hogan has championed major transit improvements in the Washington suburbs, including... the Purple Line " *Governor Hogan gave Montgomery and Prince George's Counties a veto over the Purple Line by saying that it would not be built unless they paid part of the cost -- just what the Post denounces here.*