

My name is Aqsa Siddique, I am a freshman at the College of Southern Maryland. I am writing this testimony in support of the proposed Southern Maryland Light Rail Transit Project (**HB205**).

Living in Maryland, I am proud to be close to our nation's Capital. Additionally, I am proud to be close to Annapolis as well, as I have been able to attend hearings, and even be a Page for the House of Delegates in 2019. Due to my political activeness, I often find many opportunities to intern for various political and campaign offices in Washington, D.C. Working on 'the Hill' has always been a dream of mine. Currently, I am an intern for the U.S. House of Representatives. Every day, I am commuting from Waldorf to Washington, D.C, rotating between the metro at Branch Avenue, and the MTA Commuter Bus. The last commuter bus leaves Waldorf each morning at 7:11 am, arriving to the US Capitol by 8:30. Because my internship begins at 10am, I am arriving to the Capitol 1.5 hours **before** my shift. The alternate commuting option I have is taking the D.C metro, from Branch Avenue station to Capitol South. The Branch Avenue metro station is in Prince George's County – roughly thirty minutes from my home. There is no metrobus or public transportation that allows Charles County, or even St. Mary's County citizens to travel to the metro station. This means that I, and other commuters trying to get to Washington D.C, must travel ourselves to the metro station. This luxury is not offered to everyone, as metro parking and transportation reliability are factors that must be considered. In Charles County alone, roughly **77%** of workers commute into and out of the district daily. The Southern Maryland Light Rail extension will **significantly** decrease traffic, be cost-effective for residents, provide jobs, and will overall be economically beneficial for residents.

We all have to work harder and support strong investments in the public transportation network, it is the right thing to do.

Thank you.