

February 10, 2020

Environment and Transportation Committee
House Office Building, Room 251
Annapolis, MD 21401

HB 390, Transportation – I-270 Commuter Bus Route Study (Support)

Testimony for February 13, 2020

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Thank you, Chair Barve, Vice Chair Stein, and Environment and Transportation Committee members. This testimony on behalf of the Coalition for Smarter Growth, the leading organization in the D.C. region advocating for walkable, inclusive, transit-oriented communities. We support the continuous improvement of Maryland's commuter bus service as an avenue for a more sustainable, prosperous future.

HB 390 would require the Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) to study and make recommendations on the feasibility of establishing a commuter bus route that connects Maryland residents along the I-270 corridor to job centers in Northern Virginia. Currently, there are no commuter buses or any express bus service that crosses from Maryland into Virginia, despite Northern Virginia emerging as a major employment hub.

Increased commuter bus service will position Maryland as a competitive location for new jobs and housing as the DC region continues to grow. Although Maryland was not selected for Amazon's HQ2, we can still take advantage of its proximity in National Landing by providing convenient public transit options from Maryland.

Along with being a tool for economic development, commuter buses help to relieve congestion and protect the environment by taking single-occupancy vehicles off the road. At a time when the state is considering an \$11 billion project to add new express toll lanes in a misguided attempt to decrease congestion, we need to look at our existing strategies for reducing the number of cars on our roads, of which commuter buses is one of our best and most cost effective strategies.

Therefore, we urge you to support HB 390 so that MDOT will study a more sustainable transportation option that expands Marylander's job opportunities. Thank you for your time.