

February 27, 2020

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

HB 876, Transportation - Purple Line Marketing Program (Purple Line Marketing Act) (Support)

Testimony for February 27, 2020

Jane Lyons, Maryland Advocacy Manager

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 HB 876 and the development of a sound marketing plan that will help maximize usage of the Purple Line.

HB 876 would require the Maryland Transit Administration (MTA) along with certain stakeholders to create a marketing plan that would attract interest in the Purple Line before operations begin and promote usage of the Purple Line after operations begin. This bill would also require the Governor to dedicate \$1,000,000 from the Transportation Trust Fund toward marketing efforts over three years.

Maryland residents experience some of the longest commute times in the nation, with high levels of traffic congestion and a steady increase in vehicle miles travelled each year. This is why sustainable transit options, such as the Purple Line, are necessary. The Purple Line will decrease the number of single-occupancy vehicles on the road, decrease traffic congestion, and encourage the development of transit-oriented communities, all of which are important for spurring economic development along the Purple Line corridor and reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

A sound marketing plan is crucial to ensuring that the benefits of the Purple Line are adequately relayed to potential riders. A marketing plan will help frame the Purple Line as an attractive alternative to single-occupancy vehicle use, influencing commuting decisions and attracting new customers. Marketing for Richmond, Virginia's Pulse Bus Rapid Transit system contributed to a record increase in transit ridership.

Maryland has invested a significant amount of time and resources into planning, constructing, and operating the Purple Line. To maximize the return on this investment, the next practical step would be to develop a marketing plan that focuses on spreading information about the benefits of this modern rail service.

Therefore, we ask you to vote in favor of HB 876. Thank you for your consideration.