



Maryland Chapter

7338 Baltimore Avenue, Suite 102
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Committee: Environment and Transportation
Testimony on: HB876 “Purple Line Marketing Program (Purple Line Marketing Act)”
Position: Support
Hearing Date: February 27, 2020

The Maryland Sierra Club supports HB 876. It would require the Maryland Transit Administration, in partnership with local governments and transit systems, to develop and implement a marketing plan for the Purple Line, which is now under construction and will connect communities from Bethesda in Montgomery County to New Carrollton in Prince George’s County.

The bill also would require the Governor to include in the annual state budget an appropriation of \$1 million from the Transportation Trust Fund for each fiscal year 2021 through 2024 to fund the development and implementation of the marketing plan.

The plan would highlight the Purple Line’s many features including its 21 neighborhood stations, and the direct connections it will provide to the Metrorail Red, Green and Orange lines, Amtrak, all three Maryland Area Regional Commuter (MARC) train lines, and to local and regional bus services. The marketing plan also would highlight how the Purple Line will have a low floor for easy boarding and prepayment at stations for faster access, and will operate mainly in dedicated transit lanes to enable fast and reliable east-west travel.

Having a marketing plan to generate interest in the 16-mile light rail Purple Line before the start of operations, and to promote use of the transit line after the start of operations, makes a lot of sense because it would increase ridership and help make the many other benefits of the Purple Line happen sooner.

The more that ridership can be increased by a marketing plan, the greater the foot traffic that will be generated to support local businesses near the stations, the more that transit-oriented development will be encouraged which is integral to smart growth, and the more that people will be able to travel to jobs some distance away from their homes that they are unable to access now.

Another major benefit of having a Purple Line marketing plan is that it would encourage more people to leave their car at home, which would reduce the amount of air pollution emitted from vehicle tailpipes. The transportation sector is Maryland’s number one generator of greenhouse gas as well as other health-damaging toxic emissions, so the more that people use transit and not their cars, the better it is for our health and the environment. Increasing ridership on the Purple Line also would reduce traffic on many roads which should decrease congestion. Promoting on-board storage of bicycles on the Purple Line would encourage more people to use their bikes in conjunction with riding the Purple Line, which not only would be good for their health, but also would get more cars off the road and reduce air pollution.

In summary, having a Purple Line marketing plan would generate interest in the light-rail line and increase ridership once the transit system is in operation. Developing and implementing such a plan would be a worthwhile investment, and we urge the committee to issue a favorable report on this bill.

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