

Arielle Juberg
Baltimore, Maryland
District 8

Testimony in Support of Bill HB1204, Equity in Transportation Sector – Guidelines and Analyses (Transportation Equity Analyses and Assurances Act of 2021)

To: Chair Barve and members of the House Environment and Transportation Committee
From: Arielle Juberg

My name is Arielle Juberg. I am a resident of Baltimore County in District 8. I belong to Showing Up for Racial Justice in Baltimore. I am testifying in support of HB1204, Equity in Transportation Sector – Guidelines and Analyses (Transportation Equity Analyses and Assurances Act of 2021).

Although they've aged since Mayor O'Malley made the statement, so many benches in Baltimore still proclaim that Baltimore is "the greatest city in America." I have a deep love for Baltimore; it's where I've lived, visited, and worked for nearly 10 years. However, I find it ironic that so many Baltimore residents have to wait on these statement benches for a transit system that is not deserving of the greatest city in America. Because of transit cuts, some Baltimore residents are spending three hours on a bus for a trip that would take 30 minutes by car.

Do you regularly use public transportation? If not, why? I've used the light rail and subway to reach my job and special events like Orioles games and Artscape. I'm very thankful for the essential Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) employees who have continued to operate services during the pandemic. However, we know that transit services don't serve everyone equally. In particular, Baltimore's Black communities have not been served equally, both in the past or today. Highways have been cut through African American neighborhoods, transit service is unreliable, and most recently, Governor Hogan cancelled the much anticipated Red Line.

HB1204 is so important because it centralizes racial equity in MDOT planning. It would require MDOT to collect and analyze data on racial disparities and the impact on persons with disabilities in the annual Attainment Report. The bill will also require MDOT MTA to conduct transit equity analyses, cost benefit analyses, and outreach to affected communities before public hearings on any major service change. These requirements and others will increase MDOT transparency and ensure that we consider how all groups will be impacted by MDOT changes.

If transit equity isn't incorporated into MDOT, we risk exacerbating conditions in which people can't access reliable transportation for their jobs, shopping, and worship. I hope you will consider our long history of transportation *inequity* and support common-sense legislation that begins to address our history. I respectfully urge a favorable report for HB1204.