

Committee: Environment and Transportation
Testimony on: HB1204 Transportation Equity Analyses and Assurances Act of 2021
Organization: Climate Law & Policy Project
Submitted by: Donald M. Goldberg, Executive Director
Position: Favorable
Hearing Date: March 11, 2021

Dear Chairman and Members of the Committee,

Climate Law & Policy Project strongly supports HB1204 and urges a favorable report.

Maryland has a long history of transportation policies that adversely impact minority communities, from highways built through and dividing Black communities to the cancelation of the Red Line route, which is urgently needed for access to jobs for residents in low-income communities in Baltimore.

HB1204 will play a key role in dismantling systemic racism by:

- Increasing access to good jobs, schools, education, and food;
- Providing incentives for community economic development; and
- Reducing smog, air pollution, and heat islands, which disproportionately impact Black communities

Transportation equity is also important for people with disabilities. Because many people with disabilities do not have the option to drive cars, lack of access to other modes of transportation disproportionately harms them. Without access to transportation, people with disabilities continue to be alienated from the economic mainstream. People with disabilities are twice as likely to live in poverty in part due to difficulty accessing jobs, education and medical care. Because many individuals with disabilities have increased health care needs, isolation can have a profound impact on their quality of life, health and safety.

Ultimately, there is a need for greater transparency, accountability and community input in public transportation. Equity should be the highest priority for a public transportation system. All Marylanders, regardless of race, income, zip code, or disability, should have an equal right to the benefits of a well-planned transportation system.

For these reason, Climate Law & Policy Project urges a favorable report on HB1204.