

March 9, 2021

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

Chairman Barve, Vice Chair Stein, and Members of the Environment and Transportation Committee,

My name is Susan McCutchen. I am writing in support of HB1204, sponsored by Delegate Sheila Ruth. I agree with her that for the good of all Marylanders equity must be made a priority in the Maryland Transportation Plan. As part of this effort, the Maryland Department of Transportation should be required to collect and analyze data on racial disparities and address issues related to the impact on persons with disabilities.

A commission on transportation equity should be created as an independent transit monitor and evaluator, just as a transportation project ombudsman should be appointed whose position is not subject to potential agency partisanship (i.e., HB0510). This commission would be instrumental in creating a state-level plan to ensure that the changes brought about by transit projects, such as the proposed SCMaglev system, do not adversely and disproportionately affect vulnerable Black and Brown and modest- to low-income communities and do adequately address inclusivity. Further, that the interrelationships among active (e.g., Purple Line) and proposed (e.g., SCMaglev, Hyperloop) transportation projects are thoroughly vetted for their combined effect on equity. They do not or will not exist in a vacuum and there can be calamitous unintended and life-altering consequences.

The Federal Transit Administration requires state and local transit agencies that receive federal funds to conduct a service equity analysis for any major service changes. However:

- Local transit agencies can define policies and thresholds of major service change and disparate impact, such that there can be wide variance.
- Public participation in setting these policies is inadequate.
- Due to the setting of thresholds, service equity analysis for every change is not required, is late, or is not done in a transparent fashion.
- Each mode is considered separately; however, they need to be analyzed in toto for a more accurate picture of the impact and disparities, much like an environmental ecosystem with sensitive co-dependencies.
- The Federal Transit Administration Title VI complaint process is subject to change depending on the political leanings of a given administration.

HB1204 (in conjunction with HB0510) will advance the opportunities for fair and equitable design of transportation systems with timely public input for the public good.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide written testimony. I look forward to HB1204 moving forward.

Sincerely,

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