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**House Bill 1204 - Transportation Equity Analyses and Assurances Act of
2021 (Transportation Equity Act)**

POSITION: FAVORABLE

Testimony of Rodolfo Pérez, PE

I, Rodolfo E. Pérez, PE, strongly support House Bill 1204, sponsored by Delegate Sheila Ruth, and I urge the House Environment and Transportation Committee to report favorably on this bill.

As a civil engineer with four decades of transportation experience, I know well the economic, societal and environmental benefits realized from sustainable transportation solutions for *all* travelers, not just from solutions for those who pay highway toll lanes.

As trustee of older and handicap family members, I also know well how essential access to reliable transportation has been for a dedicated staff of caretakers, nurses, therapists and others on whom my family depended for years. This valuable staff was composed by persons of color.

Maryland Black and low-income communities urgently need access to jobs, healthcare, education opportunities, and transit-oriented-development (TOD). The cancelation of the Red Line route affected these communities. Equitable transportation will play a key role in dismantling systemic inequities by:

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

Transportation equity is also important for people with disabilities to thrive and join the social and economic mainstream. People with disabilities are twice as likely to live in poverty in part due to difficulty in accessing jobs, education and medical care.

The Transportation Equity Act will benefit both disadvantaged communities and disabled people with measures such as:

- Collecting and analyzing data on racial disparities and impact on persons with disabilities in the annual Attainment Report;
- Adding a representative from the Maryland State Conference NAACP to the Attainment Advisory Committee;
- Creating a Commission on Transportation Equity as an independent transit monitor and evaluator;
- Conducting transit equity analyses, cost benefit analyses, and outreach to affected communities before public hearings on any major service change;
- Performing equity analysis and planning across all modes;
- Increasing transparency with annual reporting and service change analysis reporting.

For these reasons, I support HB 1204 and urge the Committee to issue a favorable report.