



Transportation Alliance

January 31, 2023

Testimony on HB 74 – *Maryland Rail Investment Act of 2023* Appropriations Committee

Position: Favorable with Amendments

The Central Maryland Transportation Alliance would support HB 74 with certain amendments.

The tolled facilities maintained and operated by the Maryland Transportation Authority (MDTA) are important parts of Maryland's transportation system. Their benefits include providing capacity for the movement of people and goods, and providing access to jobs, services, recreation, and other destinations for people with cars and trucks. However, they also have costs, including traffic delays, impacts to public health from air pollution, and impacts to climate change. Therefore, it is appropriate and constructive to reinvest a portion of the user fees from the tolled facilities into public transportation services that will help Marylanders get places with much lower impacts to traffic, public health and the environment.

In 2022 regarding a similar bill, HB 1324, we recommended amendments to address the equity of who benefits most from the reinvestment of the toll revenues. We are pleased to see that HB 74 expands the list of transit projects that are eligible for investment.

On the other hand, we are concerned that HB 74 would grant the new Maryland Rail Authority (MRA) the authority to supervise the planning, designing, engineering, constructing, operating, and maintaining of the Red Line project in Baltimore City and Baltimore County. The Baltimore Metropolitan Council recently issued recommendations for establishing a Baltimore Regional Transit Commission and for planning the transition to a Baltimore Regional Transit Authority. We understand that Delegate Tony Bridges may introduce bills to that effect during the 2023 session. We recommend amending HB 74 to say that the MRA could participate in the financing of the Baltimore Red Line, but that the authority to supervise its planning, design, engineering, construction, operation, and maintenance should remain with the Maryland Transit Administration. Should there be legislation to reform the governance of the MTA's core services it can address the authority over the Red Line project.