



TESTIMONY FOR HB0074
Transportation - Maryland Rail Authority - Establishment (Maryland Rail Investment Act of 2022)

Bill Sponsor: Delegate Korman

Committee: Appropriations

Organization Submitting: Maryland Legislative Coalition

Person Submitting: Cecilia Plante, co-chair

Position: FAVORABLE

I am submitting this testimony in favor of HB0074 on behalf of the Maryland Legislative Coalition. The Maryland Legislative Coalition is an association of activists - individuals and grassroots groups in every district in the state. We are unpaid citizen lobbyists, and our Coalition supports well over 30,000 members.

Maryland is a very disconnected state. There is no good way to get from Frederick to Baltimore or Annapolis, or Washington, D.C. except to get in your car and drive for over an hour each way. Getting to Northern Virginia or Delaware, or even Western Maryland, is not easy. We desperately need to extend our rail service to connect our state. The Department of Transportation seems fixated on building roads. We need a separate arm to manage this expansion properly.

This bill establishes the Maryland Rail Authority, which would have jurisdiction over expanding rail commuter (MARC) service, including expansion to Newark, DE, Northern VA, and Western MD. The Authority would also oversee replacing the Baltimore and Potomac Tunnel, planning, designing, constructing and operating the Southern Maryland Rapid Transit System as well as improvements to the Brunswick, Camden and Penn lines. The Rail Authority will utilize toll revenue to fund its endeavors. That toll revenue would come from setting optimum tolls although discounts would be provided to local residents, seniors, and those exiting in certain areas.

It is our understanding that those tolls will specifically target pass-through commuters and not hurt local commuters. We expect that the Rail Authority will keep climate justice and equity at the basis of all of their work.

Maryland needs a completely new approach to transportation. We support this bill and recommend a **FAVORABLE** report in committee.