



TESTIMONY FOR HB0950
Maryland Transit Administration - Locally Operated Transit Systems
Mandatory Funding

Bill Sponsor: Delegate Edelson

Committee: Appropriations, Budget and Tax

Organization Submitting: Maryland Legislative Coalition

Person Submitting: Aileen Alex, co-chair

Position: FAVORABLE

I am submitting this testimony in favor of HB0950 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.

HB0950 requires that, starting in Fiscal Year 2026, the state budget include an annual appropriation of at least \$80 million to fund the Locally Operated Transit Systems (LOTS). LOTS provide transit service in each of Maryland's 23 counties and other jurisdictions. LOTS helps to serve the needs of urban, rural, and suburban communities and provide Marylanders with critical access to jobs, education, food, healthcare, and recreation.

The need for public transportation in Maryland's urban areas is well documented. In addition, Garrett County Democratic Central Committee shared with our Coalition that economic growth in "mountain" Maryland is hampered by the lack of state funding for drivers ed and limited access to public transportation. This severely affects job opportunities for the economically disadvantaged in the western part of the state.

Having a strong public transportation system is also key to Maryland's strategy to fight the climate crisis. Public transportation helps us achieve our goal to reduce per-capita Vehicle Miles Traveled 10% by 2030 and 20% by 2050. It also conserves natural resources and land by reducing the need for road construction, parking spaces, and harmful chemicals

To meet these targets and improve mobility for everyone, we should expand and invest in these programs, not scale them back due to current budget shortfalls.

We support this bill and recommend a **FAVORABLE** report in committee.