



MARYLAND LEAGUE
OF CONSERVATION VOTERS

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SUPPORT HB368: Maryland Transit Safety & Investment Act

Dear Chairman McIntosh and members of the Committee:

Maryland League of Conservation Voters strongly urges a favorable report on HB368: *Maryland Transit Safety and Investment Act*. This bill is one of Maryland LCV's top priorities for this session.

Public transportation is the great equalizer. It has the potential to move large numbers of people safely and economically throughout the state, connecting them with jobs, community and medical resources. Additionally, it provides economic, educational and recreational opportunities. This is even more important for low-wealth groups and populations of color, where safe and reliable public transportation is an important factor in determining upward mobility.

However, a safe, reliable and affordable public transit system in Maryland that serves the interest of all residents is at risk. Last year the Maryland Transit Administration (MTA) released its first ever Capital Needs Inventory to assess the MTA's ongoing, unconstrained capital needs. The Inventory identified \$5.7 billion of capital needs over the next ten years, \$1.5 billion of which is an accumulated backlog of deferred maintenance. The Maryland Department of Transportation's FY 2020–2025 Consolidated Transportation Program (CTP) does not provide the MTA enough funding over the next six years to address the annual maintenance and repairs identified in the CNI. In fact, the proposed program will add to the backlog.

The consequences of neglecting maintenance of buses, light rail vehicles, subway trains and commuter trains is that they break down much more frequently than the MTA's peer agencies. As a result, lower-income people who can't afford cars are disproportionately affected by these service interruptions.

Maryland LCV's Latino Outreach Program, Chispa Maryland, works with community members who identify public transportation as a necessity; these communities rely on public transportation to take their children to school, get themselves to work, grocery shop and fulfill other basic

needs. They understand that public transit can expand the opportunities available to them to advance in life. If we allow this system to fail, parents will wait for hours at a bus stop in the rain or scorching sun to take their children to school. The number of routes that connect people to good paying jobs, healthy food and healthcare will be cut back and in general, people relying on this public transportation will be restricted from access to economic opportunities and upward mobility, perpetuating inequalities within these communities.

The Transit Safety & Investment Act will mandate that MTA's capital budget be at a level that allows it to address all the needs identified in the Capital Needs Inventory and get the system back into a state of good repair so that it can operate safely and reliably for all Marylanders.

The Maryland League of Conservation Voters strongly urges your favorable report on this important bill.

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