



February 4th, 2020

Written Testimony for HB 368 - Maryland Transit Safety & Investment Act

Submitted by Denisse Guitarra, Maryland Conservation Advocate, Audubon Naturalist Society (ANS)

Dear House Appropriations Committee,

For 122 years, Audubon Naturalist Society has inspired people to enjoy, learn about and protect nature. We thank the House Appropriations Committee for the opportunity to provide testimony for HB 368 - Maryland Transit Safety & Investment Act.

In July 2019, pursuant to §7–309 of the Code of Maryland, the Maryland Transit Administration (MTA) released its first ever Capital Needs Inventory (CNI) to assess the MTA's ongoing, unconstrained capital needs. The CNI 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 over the next six years to address the annual maintenance and repairs in the CNI. In fact it will add to the backlog.

The result of the neglected maintenance is buses, light rail vehicles, subway trains and commuter trains that break down more frequently than the MTA's peer agencies. This leads to poor service which leads to drops in ridership, and a negative spiral.

ANS supports HB 368 because investing in more transit is the equitable and sustainable solution under today's climate change crisis. Transportation is the number one source of greenhouse gas emission in Maryland and the USA. In order to combat climate change, the state must reduce its GHG emission by investing more in transit. The HB 368 bill will provide a much-needed reprioritization of funds to make Maryland's transit systems more reliable, safe and efficient. These funds will increase Marylanders' confidence and security in using public transit as their preferred mode of transportation. By investing in transit, the state secures protection of our valuable green spaces and waterways as opposed to highway expansions which would only degrade these precious spaces by incentivizing sprawl development patterns.

The Transit Safety & Investment Act will mandate that MTA's capital budget be at a level that allows it to address all of the needs identified and get the system back into a state of good repair so that it can operate safely and reliably. On behalf of ANS and our 28,000 members and supporters, we recommend that the House Appropriations Committee support the passage of HB 368.

Sincerely,
Denisse Guitarra, ANS Maryland Conservation Advocate

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