

February 4, 2020

**Testimony on HB 368 –
Maryland Transit Safety & Investment Act
Appropriations**

Position: Favorable

Maryland Nonprofits urges you to support House Bill 368.

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 way more often than the MTA’s peer agencies. This leads to poor service which leads to drops in ridership, and a negative spiral.

Even if maintenance were not an issue, ‘public transit’ as MTA now provides it is not meeting the needs of many Marylanders in the service area. Poor and inadequate service is more than a budget problem – it has an enormous human, social and economic consequences to communities and the state as a whole. It already translates to missed opportunities to work at jobs people can’t reach, as well as education, health and other services and opportunities that are not accessible to those who must rely on transit.

This House Bill 368 would simply provide the resources to keep existing services in good repair at their current level. While enhancement to meet unmet needs may not be possible, we can’t afford to lose what is already in place.

We urge to you to give House Bill 368 a favorable report.