



CHESAPEAKE BAY FOUNDATION

*Environmental Protection and Restoration
Environmental Education*

House Bill 368

Maryland Transit Administration - Funding (Transit Safety and Investment Act)

DATE: FEBRUARY 4, 2020

POSITION: SUPPORT

POSITION

The Chesapeake Bay Foundation requests a favorable report on House Bill 368 from the Appropriations Committee. Safe and dependable transit systems are a critical element of Maryland's clean water and climate strategy. HB 368 ensures that capital funding for the Maryland Transit Administration will be available to maintain and improve these systems.

COMMENTS

In 2018, the General Assembly required the Maryland Transit Administration to assess its capital needs on a three-year rolling basis. The first of these reports revealed an unfunded \$2 billion backlog of deferred maintenance and important system upgrades. HB 368 builds on the General Assembly's prior actions to ensure that MTA has access to capital funding that is in-step with transit needs. The bill would increase funding for capital projects required to keep the systems safe, dependable, and in-service by an average of 35% until 2027.

Maryland has committed to cut nitrogen pollution by 15% within the next five years in its watershed improvement plan. The State's has also adopted a greenhouse gas emissions goal of a 40% reduction from 2006 levels by 2030. Transportation services including light rail, metro, buses, and rural shuttles, provides transportation access to residents statewide while supporting statutory and regulatory goals to reduce carbon and nitrogen emissions that impair local waterways and pollute the environment.

Unreliable and inaccessible transit systems are less convenient, and therefore less effective alternatives to higher-polluting transportation modes, such as highways. Maryland's watershed improvement plan relies on – and in fact assumes – stable, ongoing control of airborne sources of nitrogen pollution to the Chesapeake Bay. Chronic funding shortfalls for our public transit systems threaten this assumption and compound the challenges posed by recent Federal rollbacks to clean air protections in the transportation sector. HB 368 ensures that Maryland's public transit system continues to support efforts to meet clean water and climate goals.

CONCLUSION

The Chesapeake Bay Foundation recommends a favorable report on HB 368 from the Appropriations Committee. For questions or more information, please contact Erik Fisher, AICP, Maryland Assistant Director and Land Use Planner, at 443.482.2096 or efisher@cbf.org.

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The Chesapeake Bay Foundation (CBF) is a non-profit environmental education and advocacy organization dedicated to the restoration and protection of the Chesapeake Bay. With over 300,000 members and e-subscribers, including over 107,000 in Maryland alone, CBF works to educate the public and to protect the interest of the Chesapeake and its resources.