



February 25, 2020

The Honorable Maggie McIntosh, Chair
Appropriations Committee
121 House Office Building
6 Bladen Street
Annapolis, MD 21401

OPPOSE

RE: HB 715 – State Finance and Procurement - Prohibited Appropriations - Magnetic Levitation Transportation System

Dear Chair McIntosh, Vice Chair Jackson, and Members of the Committee:

I am Reverend Charles McNeill, pastor of Unity Baptist Church in our nation's capital. Not only do I pastor residents of the DC region, but I am a homeowner in Prince George's County.

I also have the distinction of serving as president of the National Capital Baptist Convention, which includes member churches in Maryland's Charles, Montgomery and Prince George's counties as well as the District of Columbia and Northern Virginia.

I sit before you today in **opposition** to House Bill 715.

If approved by the Maryland General Assembly, the proposal would be harmful to the fate of the SCMAGLEV project before it is even fully studied. By preemptively fettering the project, HB715 does not speak to the need in African American communities for employment and empowerment.

I also sit before you today in support of truly revolutionary high speed transportation service connecting the Baltimore Washington Corridor initially and eventually the Northeast Corridor.

This service will not only be revolutionary by bringing the world's fastest train to our area. It will also be revolutionary by connecting some of our nation's largest and most significant metropolitan centers with world class, cutting edge transportation technology—reducing the time between them and, in effect, shrinking geography. It will also offer unparalleled benefits to the citizens of our region by filling the Baltimore Washington Corridor with new employment opportunities.

On this last point, we need good paying jobs with easy access. The SCMAGLEV project will generate large numbers of both permanent jobs and long term construction-related careers. Ranging from high-skilled STEM careers to administrative and maintenance functions, as well as ancillary service and support businesses and contracting opportunities, this project will help lead to a brighter future for many diverse Marylanders.

I am committed to work with Northeast Maglev to make sure individuals from my region take advantage of the available opportunities. That is why my organization supports the project.

At NCBC, our churches are not only places of worship, but stewards of our community's welfare. The economic opportunities this project will provide are momentous, and our relationship with Northeast Maglev will benefit communities served by our member churches.

Proposals like HB715 introduce risk for the SCMAGLEV project, and the loss of the project would be a great disadvantage for many Prince Georgians and residents of other DMV communities.

So, please do not limit our access or impose roadblocks to our opportunity. Whether we will ride the train, build the infrastructure, operate the service, own businesses that contract with the developer, or have children who are inspired to enter STEM careers, this is an idea whose time has come—and we need to be involved.

For this reason, on behalf of the entire National Capital Baptist Convention, I ask that you submit an unfavorable committee report. It is in the best interest of our communities, and I believe, the entire state of Maryland.

Thank you for your consideration.

Reverend Charles W. McNeill, Jr.
National Capital Baptist Convention