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February 25, 2020

The Honorable Maggie McIntosh
Chair, House Appropriations Committee
MD General Assembly
Room 121
House Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

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

POSITION: **OPPOSE**

Dear Chair McIntosh, Vice Chair Jackson, and members of the committee,

I am writing to express the Baltimore County Chamber of Commerce's strong opposition to **HB 715**.

As a long-standing community partner, the Baltimore County Chamber of Commerce ensures that the county maintains a healthy business climate, a well-trained and educated workforce, quality schools and safe neighborhoods - not just for the interest of business, but for the future of our community. This bill stands in the way of the type of progress we stand for.

Put simply, this bill aims to establish unnecessary hurdles for the sole purpose of stopping the SCMAGLEV project. That would be bad for business in Baltimore County, and for the State of Maryland as a whole.

There are huge concerns with our area's current transportation system. Our infrastructure is outdated and crumbling. Congestion throughout the Northeast Corridor, the nation's densest area and most economically productive, is only getting worse. We know it will take thoughtful solutions to relieve traffic and deliver meaningful progress for our region.

Baltimore-Washington Rapid Rail is not operating in isolation to deliver the SCMAGLEV, a project we believe can be a game-changer for our region. The company has been working with more than 30 Federal, State, and Local agencies, in support of the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) process that is being led by the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) and the

Maryland Department of Transportation-Maryland Transit Administration (MDOT-MTA). The EIS is being prepared in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA), which was established to address the same kinds of concerns that seem to have inspired this legislation.

As important as Baltimore County is to us, we recognize that a project like this represents progress for more than just our county. It represents job opportunities, business opportunities, and community growth and development opportunities for millions along the Northeast Corridor. It represents a future with less pollution, traffic, and with an emphasis on clean, efficient transportation and transit oriented development. We want to be a part of this future.

HB 715 is an attempt to block, not only a potential source of thousands of transportation construction jobs, but a potential source of opportunity and public good for so many.

We ask that you not stand in the way of public good and opportunity and submit an unfavorable report.

Sincerely,



Brent Howard,
President and Chief Executive Officer
Baltimore County Chamber of Commerce
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