



February 12, 2020

**Testimony on HB 424–
Maryland Transit Safety & Investment Act
Budget & Taxation**

Position: Favorable

Chesapeake Physicians for Social Responsibility supports HB 424.

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, resulting in poor service and a drop in ridership.

As physicians, we are deeply concerned about the negative health consequences of reduced MTA usage. Specifically, the widespread use of public transportation reduces vehicle emissions, which are known to impair lung function and exacerbate a variety of pulmonary diseases we encounter in our patients. Children in particular are most vulnerable to their effects. Furthermore, the use of public transportation generally necessitates more physical activity than driving. Even a few short walks to and from a bus stop or metro station are integral to mitigating the risk of cardiovascular disease and diabetes, which are among the most commonly encountered diseases in our practices and extremely costly to our economy.

We strongly feel that safe and reliable public transportation is a critical part of the ensuring health of Marylanders, and that passage of the Transit Safety & Investment Act is a substantive step in reaching our shared goal.

We encourage a favorable report.