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March 17, 2020

The Honorable Delores Kelley  
Chair, Senate Finance Committee  
3 East Miller Senate Building  
Annapolis MD 21401

**Re: *Letter of Information– House Bill 1367 – Transportation - Western Maryland MARC Rail Extension – Study***

Dear Chair Kelley and Committee Members:

The Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) takes no position on House Bill 1367 but offers the following information for the committee’s consideration.

House Bill 1367 requires the MDOT Maryland Transit Administration (MDOT MTA) study and report the feasibility of the expansion of Maryland Area Regional Commuter (MARC) rail service to Western Maryland. The feasibility study, in conjunction with various stakeholders, is required to be completed by July 2022.

MARC is a 187-mile commuter rail system that provides service on three lines: the Penn Line (Washington, D.C. and Perryville, MD), the Brunswick Line (Washington, D.C. and Martinsburg, WV), and the Camden Line (Washington, D.C. and Baltimore, MD). Under MTA, MARC Train Service is operated under a contract with Amtrak (Penn Line) and CSX Transportation (Camden and Brunswick Lines).

House Bill 1367 mandates several in-depth aspects of a feasibility study including a review of existing conditions and needs, a cost-benefit analysis of all potential expansions, a 5 percent conceptual design of all potential expansions, a service planning analysis of all potential expansions, extensive stakeholder engagement, as well as traffic and travel demand modeling. The cost to complete the study is estimated to be greater than \$3.5 million to complete the required scope of the bill; this cost is not impacted by the schedule. The bill, as amended, includes four additional stakeholders, which may add another \$200,000 to the cost of the study.

The cost to complete the actions required by this bill are exacerbated by the vague nature of many of the requirements. House Bill 1367 does not thoroughly outline what service is required to be explored by the department and contains requirements that the department cannot meet. For example, the “CSX Green Line” is not a defined rail segment and therefore adds ambiguity to the requirements of the study. Additionally, the bill outlines origin points but does not thoroughly describe the desired destination of the service, which could result in a study that does not meet the original intent of the house bill.

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Further, MDOT MTA cannot speak for CSX and the impact extending MARC service would have on their operations. As CSX collects and retains their own data, it is difficult for MDOT MTA to estimate any potential impacts House Bill 1367 would have on them at this time.

The Maryland Department of Transportation respectfully requests that the committee consider this information when deliberating House Bill 1367.

Respectfully submitted,

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