January 29, 2020

Testimony on HB 72
Maryland Transportation Authority - Video Streaming and Archiving - Open Meetings
Health and Government Operations

Position: Favorable

Common Cause Maryland support HB 72 which would significantly increase access to and the efficiency of the Maryland Transportation Authority (MDTA) meetings process by requiring that those meetings are live streamed online and preserved for later viewing.

Streaming video and online preservation are easy and efficient way to enhance Marylanders' access to institutions throughout the State. This access and transparency is particularly necessary for the MDTA, who is responsible for constructing, managing, operating and improving the State's toll facilities, as well as for financing new revenue producing transportation projects. As MDTA recently announced moving towards cashless tolling and other projects, it is important that Marylanders are able to have access and understanding of how these changes will impact them and their communities and how these matters are shaped in the state.

For too many citizens, the work done by MDTA is a distant and often undecipherable series of activities. Many Marylanders are unable to come to Baltimore in person but have a strongly vested interest in the policies and decisions being made by the MDTA Board. For those citizens, the current access to activities in the form of written meeting minutes activities is simply not open and transparent enough.

As technology makes information in all its forms more readily available, Maryland should continue seeking ways to utilize these technologies to increase accessibility to information across the state. The technology to live-stream and preserve those meetings is inexpensive and widespread.
Providing for streaming allows all Marylanders, no matter their ability, to participate.

Because HB 72 would vastly increase Marylanders' access to the open meetings of the Maryland Transportation Authority at a negligible cost, we urge the committee to report favorably.