

February 3, 2021

**Testimony on HB 114 –
Maryland Transit Safety & Investment Act
Appropriations**

Position: Favorable

Kathryn M. Gargurevich supports HB 114, the Transit Safety & Investment Act.

In July 2019, the Maryland Transit Administration (MTA) released its first ever Capital Needs Inventory (CNI) to assess its 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. Unfortunately, MDOT's FY 2021–2026 Consolidated Transportation Program (CTP) does not provide the MTA sufficient funding to address the annual maintenance and repairs identified in the CNI. In fact, at current funding levels the maintenance backlog will grow.

The result of the neglected maintenance is buses, light rail vehicles, subway trains and commuter trains that break down more often than the MTA's peer agencies, and in some cases, more often than any transit agency in the nation. Paratransit service also continues to malfunction. This leads to poor service which leads to drops in ridership, and a negative spiral.

As someone concerned about the environment and actually someone that prefers public transit to driving my car, I would like to see a favorable report on this legislation. In the fall of 2019 I traveled by rail from Union Station to Boston, MA, where I have 4 siblings and their families living, for a visit. While I can afford air travel, I chose rail due to the much lower carbon footprint of rail travel compared to air travel. I also traveled by rail to Philadelphia in March of 2020 right before the pandemic shut down. And as a suburban MD resident I use our Ride-on service and to get into downtown Bethesda and the Metro for travel into the District. This would be an investment that saves money in the long-term and creates jobs (money spent on maintaining the transportation system creates more jobs per dollar than money spent on new capacity).

The funding for this bill will only come from the Transportation Trust Fund. Money from the Trust Fund should be focused on maintaining the assets that we, especially in a budgetary strain instead of expansion efforts. For example, instead of spending \$43 million for what is supposed no cost to the taxpayer project to plan the privatized road-widening boondoggle on I-270 and I-495 these funds could be used for keeping our current transit system safe to use. I strenuously oppose this road widening project for more streets mean more cars, that is a certainty.

The Transit Safety & Investment Act will mandate that MTA's capital budget be at a level that allows it to address all of the needs identified and get the system back into a state of good repair so that it can operate safely and reliably.

We encourage a FAVORABLE report for this important legislation.

Thank you for your time and attention to this,
Kathryn M. Gargurevich 6806 Bradley Blvd. Bethesda, MD