

**Testimony to the House Appropriations Committee  
HB 114: Transit Safety and Investment Act  
Position: Favorable**

February 3, 2021

The Honorable Maggie McIntosh, Chair  
House Appropriations Committee  
Room 121, House Office Building  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401  
cc: Members, Education, Health, & Environmental Affairs Committee

Chair McIntosh and Members of the Committee:

The Maryland Consumer Rights Coalition (MCRC) is a statewide coalition of individuals and organizations that advances economic rights and financial inclusion for Maryland consumers through research, education, direct service, and advocacy. Our 8,500 supporters include consumer advocates, practitioners, and low-income and working families throughout Maryland.

MCRC is writing today in support of HB 114.

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 way more often than the MTA's peer agencies. This leads to poor service which leads to drops in ridership, and a negative spiral.

Our work on economic rights and with households across the state, but particularly in Baltimore City, demonstrates the critical need for affordable, accessible transportation. Transportation mobility is inextricably entwined with economic mobility in a region where many jobs that pay a family-sustaining wage are located 45 minutes from job seekers in the city. This disconnect

affects workforce development, the economy, and the time spent trying to travel by the currently inadequate public transportation in place. Making public transportation work for families by ensuring it is frequent, in good condition, and affordable is a critical component in helping households recover from the recession and regain employment.

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.

For all these reasons, we support HB 114 and urge a favorable report.

Best,

Marceline White  
Executive Director  
Maryland Consumer Rights Coalition