



February 3, 2021

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

Position: Favorable

Green For All, a program of national social justice nonprofit Dream Corps, supports HB 114, the Transit Safety & Investment Act.

The Maryland Transit Administration (MTA) faces a funding shortfall that will prevent it from meeting its most essential maintenance needs over the next five years. The Maryland Transit Administration's first Capital Needs Inventory (CNI) determined that \$462 million is required annually to cover basic safety and repair costs. However, at current levels, MDOT's FY 2021–2026 Consolidated Transportation Program (CTP) funding is inadequate to keep MTA's systems running smoothly, which is cause for considerable concern.

MTA's vehicles have a track record of frequent breakdowns. A shortage in funding for critical repairs has a cascade effect on transit dependent riders, who are disproportionately essential workers, low income people, and people of color. When these communities face longer wait times and unpredictable transit, this means more missed buses and missed work days, lost jobs, and increased fees in the form of child care and expenses that riders simply cannot afford. And, when single occupancy vehicles are substituted for transit, it leads to increased traffic, pollution that hits communities of color worst, and emissions that contribute further to the climate crisis.

The Transit Safety & Investment Act will increase MTA's capital budget to keep critical transit services operating for those who need it most. In the wake of COVID-19, Green For All has worked with supporters and partners across the country to advocate for greater transit funding at both the state and federal level because we know that a healthy public transit system is central to tackling pollution, poverty, and the history of systemic racism in our transportation systems. Keeping MTA's buses, light rail vehicles, subway trains, and MARC commuter trains moving is a first and fundamental step toward ensuring economic opportunity for the communities hit hardest by COVID. It helps riders reach essential destinations more affordably and invests in high quality job generation for years to come.

For these reasons, we highly encourage a favorable report.

Sincerely,

Shannon Baker-Branstetter
Deputy Director of Policy
Dream Corps Green For All