



February 3, 2021

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

**Position: Favorable**

The undersigned organizations support HB 114, the Transit Safety & Investment Act, and encourage a favorable report from the Committee.

In July 2019, the Maryland Transit Administration (MTA) released its first ever Capital Needs Inventory (CNI) to assess its ongoing 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 this neglected maintenance is that buses, light rail vehicles, subway trains and MARC commuter trains break down more often than its peer agencies, and in some cases more often than any transit agency in the nation. This means that far too often riders are late or simply stranded. Paratransit services continue to malfunction, resulting in riders with disabilities missing dialysis or health appointments and being stranded when paratransit is late or fails to appear. This burden of less safe and reliable transit falls hardest on Marylanders that live in communities of color, low income communities, and people with disabilities. This would be bad enough in normal times, but the COVID-19 pandemic has revealed that a significant portion of

transit ridership is made up of the essential workers we all rely on. TransitCenter found that 40% of transit commuters in Baltimore City and 35% of transit riders in the state work in essential job sectors, with hospital and health care workers being the largest share of riders. A large number of essential workers – nurses, grocery store workers, child care professionals, nursing care staff, and so many more – rely on public transit to get to their jobs. The proposed cuts would make it harder for these vital workers to get to their jobs, which would threaten their employment and exacerbate the devastation of the pandemic.

It is not only riders who suffer from underfunding transit. The transportation sector is now the leading source of greenhouse gas emissions in the country and in Maryland. To reduce those emissions, the state will need strategies that reduce how much we all drive, including giving more people the option to take transit. But people cannot and will not choose transit if it is unreliable. Besides daily delays from disrepair, both the Metro Subway and Light Rail systems have experienced weeks-long emergency shutdowns in the last few years. We can't expect people to choose transit or be able to use it if it's going to suddenly disappear for weeks at a time.

MTA operates local buses, commuter buses, light rail, MARC, and paratransit, and provides funding to locally operated transit systems in every Maryland county, Baltimore City, Annapolis, and Ocean City. 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. It will also make funding available to the locally operated transit systems throughout Maryland.

We encourage a FAVORABLE report for this important legislation.

Save Maryland Transit Coalition

350.org

Action Committee for Transit

American Council of the Blind of Maryland

ArchPlan

Audubon Naturalist Society

Baltimore Transit Equity Coalition

Bikemore

Bus Workgroup 14

Blue Water Baltimore

Campaign for Human Rights

Chesapeake Bay Foundation

CCAN

Cedar Lane Unitarian Universalist Church

Central Maryland Transportation Alliance

Chesapeake Physicians for Social Responsibility

Climate Justice Wing

Climate Stewards of Greater Annapolis  
Coalition for Smarter Growth  
Consumers for Accessible Ride Services  
Creation Care Action & Advocacy of the Baltimore-Washington Conf of UMC  
Disability Rights Maryland  
Downtown Residents Advocacy Network  
Emmanuel United Methodist Church, Laurel  
Fund for Educational Excellence  
Get Maryland Moving  
Green for All  
Greenbelt Climate Action Network  
Howard County Climate Action  
Indivisible Howard County MD  
Indivisible Towson  
Interfaith Partners for the Chesapeake  
Interfaith Power & Light (DC.MD.NoVA)  
Job Opportunities Task Force  
Labor Network For Sustainability  
League for People with Disabilities  
League of Women Voters of Maryland  
Maryland League of Conservation Voters  
Maryland Legislative Coalition  
Marylanders for Patients Rights  
Maryland Nonprofits  
Maryland PIRG  
Maryland Sierra Club  
Maryland ADAPT  
Maryland Advocates for Sustainable Transportation  
Maryland Center on Economic Policy  
Maryland Consumer Rights Coalition  
Mom's Organic Market  
Montgomery Countryside Alliance  
NAACP Maryland State Conference  
NARAL Pro-Choice Maryland  
Nature Conservancy Maryland/DC  
National Alliance on Mental Illness Maryland  
Nuclear Information and Resource Service  
Our Revolution Baltimore  
Progressive Maryland  
Safe Skies Maryland  
Smart Growth Maryland  
Solutionary Rail  
Strong Future Maryland  
Green Team at St. Vincent de Paul Church, Baltimore

Sunrise Movement Baltimore  
Sunrise Movement Howard County  
Takoma Park Mobilization  
Transit Choices  
Transition Howard County  
Unitarian Universalist Legislative Ministry of Maryland  
VOICES  
Washington Area Bicyclist Association  
WISE