

February 1, 2021

Appropriations Committee
House Office Building, Room 121
Annapolis, MD 21401

**HB 114, Maryland Transit Administration – Fund (Transit Safety and Investment Act)
(Support)**

Testimony for February 3, 2021

Jane Lyons, Maryland Advocacy Manager

Chair McIntosh, Vice Chair Chang, and committee members, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on HB 114, the Transit Safety and Investment Act. Please accept these comments on behalf of the Coalition for Smarter Growth, the leading organization in the D.C. region advocating for walkable, bikeable, inclusive, transit-oriented communities as the most sustainable and equitable way to grow and provide opportunities for all.

We strongly support the Transit Safety and Investment Act because Maryland's public transit is in peril. Maryland transit systems face a \$5.7 billion in capital needs over the next ten years, including a \$1.5 billion accumulated backlog in deferred maintenance, according to the first ever Capital Needs Inventory. Currently, the Maryland Department of Transportation's FY 2021-2026 Consolidated Transportation Program does not provide anywhere near the funding necessary to address this critical backlog in maintenance and repairs.

We desperately need to fill this gap to provide working Marylanders the connection to jobs and amenities that they deserve. This backlog will not disappear – it will only get worse, and in the process thousands of people will be waiting for buses and trains that have broken down, missing out on work, shopping, and time spent with family.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, we have seen the importance of transit as essential workers have particularly relied on bus service to get to their vital jobs. Most of these workers are lower-income and people of color. Ensuring these residents have safe and reliable transit is important for working toward a more equitable society and keeping the economy running.

Therefore, we urge you to support HB 114 to get the Maryland Transit Administration back into a state of good repair. Let's fix our existing service and then move forward with the service expansion necessary to meet our climate, economic development, and equity goals. Thank you for your consideration.