

February 3, 2021

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

**Position: Favorable**

Anna Ellis 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 a frequent pre-pandemic light rail rider, I am dismayed by the number of delay of service emails received from the MTA. While I appreciate knowing about the delays, so I can plan my trip accordingly, there are almost 25 emails on average per month. Many of these emails state that the delay is 'minor', but regardless of how minor a delay may be, it does not encourage light rail ridership. The cause of these delays is usually not known from the emails, but having been on trains that have broken down, it does indicate that there are maintenance issues with the current system.

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.

I encourage a FAVORABLE report for this important legislation.