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January 27, 2021

**Testimony on SB 199 –
Maryland Transit Safety & Investment Act
Budget & Taxation**

Position: Favorable

The Central Maryland Transportation Alliance supports SB 199 and encourages a favorable report from the Committee.

At current funding levels the maintenance backlog at the Maryland Transit Administration (MTA) continues to grow.

The result of this neglected maintenance is that buses, light rail vehicles, subway trains and MARC commuter trains break down more often than at 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.

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.

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.