



Jan 18, 2021

Testimony on SB0199
Transit Safety and Investment Act
Senate Budget and Taxation Committee

Position: Favorable

I am writing as an elder ally of the youth-led Sunrise Movement Baltimore to urge your favorable report for SB0199 Transit Safety and Investment Act.

The transportation sector is the leading source of greenhouse gas emissions in the state of Maryland. This means a robust public transit system that would get cars off the road is a key to addressing the climate crisis and avoiding its worst effects.

Here in Baltimore we are already seeing the climate crisis disproportionately hitting our low-income communities and Black and brown communities first and worst, with extreme flooding during storms and heat island effects that contribute to exacerbated respiratory disease, higher health care costs, missed work days, and higher rates of illness and death.

Since we know that access to public transit is also the number one factor in escaping poverty, a healthy transit system is also an economic and racial justice issue. Attracting sought-after employers to Maryland and to the City of Baltimore in particular is pointless if the candidates for those jobs can't get to the workplace.

Right now, the poor state of repair and terrible reliability rates of our public transit are crippling the City's ability not only to function as a modern 21st-century city, but also for its economy to grow to the benefit of everyone here -- not just those who already have wealth and power.

The Maryland Transit Administration has a lot of work to do to grow and develop into the truly transformative builder of healthy communities that it could be. But first, we are asking the General Assembly just to fund the safety and reliability of what we already have -- the basics.

As someone who has waited in vain -- multiple times -- for MTA buses that never came, and as a witness to communities in Baltimore that have essentially been abandoned by their own elected officials, I can tell you this commitment to MTA's capital needs is long overdue. For the people, for the health of the economy, for economic and racial justice, and for the planet.

I encourage a FAVORABLE report for this important legislation. Thank you for your time and consideration.

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