

January 27, 2021

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

**Position: Favorable**

Christine Slater supports SB 199, 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 (26%) 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.

Funding levels are on course to go lower which would only make the maintenance backlog grow worse. We have a transit system that breaks down at an alarmingly high frequency. These are state assets that must be managed better and the General Assembly needs to step in to ensure MDOT does the right thing -- it's a responsibility that the state already has.

Note that MDOT Sec. Slater himself has said that ***managing state of good repair is a case of pay now or pay more later***. If we don't pay now, future taxpayers will pay higher costs later. And further – in these times of COVID and a restricted economy – this investment will create jobs!! Money spent on \*maintaining\* our existing transportation system creates more jobs per dollar than money spent on new capacity.

Here in Montgomery County, residents depend on the MARC Brunswick Commuter rail to provide critical connecting service between Frederick and DC; plus Penn and Camden Lines connect us from DC to the Baltimore Region. Did you know that ***our commuter rail system is the 4th worst in the nation for breakdowns??*** We need safe and reliable MARC service to connect workers to their jobs. This is especially important if we want to have a strong economic recovery.

SB 199 will also make funds available for locally operated transit systems across the state, including RideOn, which is the primary public transportation system in Montgomery County. In addition to serving Montgomery County, RideOn serves the community of Langley Park in Prince George's County and Sibley Memorial Hospital in Washington, D.C.

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 ("Back to Good") so that it can operate safely and reliably.

We encourage a FAVORABLE report for this important legislation.

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