

January 18 2021

Testimony on Senate Bill 199
Maryland Transit Safety & Investment Act
Senate Budget and Tax Committee

Position: Favorable

Maryland Nonprofits is a statewide association of more than 1100 nonprofit organizations and institutions. We strongly urge you to support Senate Bill 199.

The Capital Needs Inventory released by the Maryland Transit Administration (MTA) in July 2019 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. This leads to poor service which leads to drops in ridership, and a negative spiral.

Even if maintenance were not an issue, 'public transit' as MTA now provides it is not meeting the needs of many Marylanders in the service area. Poor and inadequate service is more than a budget problem – it has an enormous human, social and economic consequences to communities and the state as a whole. As nonprofit service providers tell us, it already translates to missed opportunities to work at jobs people can't reach, as well as education, health and other services and opportunities that are not accessible to those who must rely on transit.

For too many people, the problem is not finding a doctor, dialysis center, counseling, a job, child care, a place in training or school, or other services. **The problem is getting there.** We need to address that problem in the broad and comprehensive way necessary.

While it will not cure all of the State's transportation needs, we urge you to give Senate Bill 199 a favorable report and 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 at least operate safely and reliably.

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Maryland Nonprofits' mission is to strengthen organizations and networks for greater quality of life and equity.