

January 15, 2020

Environment and Transportation Committee
House Office Building, Room 251
Annapolis, MD 21401

HB 116, Transportation – I-270 Commuter Bus Route Study (Support)

Testimony for January 19, 2021

Jane Lyons, Maryland Advocacy Manager

Thank you, Chair Barve, Vice Chair Stein, and committee members. This testimony on behalf of the Coalition for Smarter Growth, the leading organization in the D.C. region advocating for walkable, bikeable, inclusive, transit-oriented communities. We support the continuous improvement of Maryland's bus service as an avenue for a more sustainable, prosperous future.

HB 116 would require the Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) to establish a commuter bus route that connects Maryland residents around Shady Grove Metro to Tysons in Northern Virginia. Currently, there are no commuter buses or any express bus service that crosses from Maryland into Virginia, despite Northern Virginia emerging as a major employment hub.

Operation would begin in fall 2022, when it is likely many office employees will begin returning to in-person work and will not want to sit at the wheel in I-270 congestion the way they did prior to the pandemic. Increased commuter bus service will enhance our economic competitiveness by providing both improved connectivity between some of the region's most significant job centers and enhancing employee productivity compared to driving. Whether through sleeping during the commute or working via WiFi, employees' productivity will be enhanced.

Commuter bus service is a cost-effective strategy for providing alternatives to driving in congestion. Therefore, we urge you to support HB 116 so we can improve conditions for Maryland commuters and our economic productivity. Thank you for your time.