



Committee: Appropriations

Testimony on: HB1324-Maryland Rail Investment Act

Organization: Climate Justice Wing of the Maryland Legislative Coalition

Submitting: Diana Younts, Co-Chair

Position: Favorable

Hearing Date: March 8, 2022

Dear M. Chair and Committee Members:

Thank you for allowing our testimony today in support of HB1324. The Maryland Legislative Coalition (MLC) Climate Justice Wing, a statewide coalition of over 50 grassroots and professional organizations, urges you to vote favorably on HB1324.

Vehicles are the biggest contributor to Maryland's greenhouse gas emissions and their infrastructure scars our communities with unsightly, multi-lane roadways that pollute the surrounding communities with noxious and unhealthy tailpipe exhaust, and the vehicles on those roadways kill increasingly more pedestrians in our car centric country. We are mired in this state of affairs in large part because we have neglected our railways and mass transit.

HB1324 aims to fix that problem by creating a Maryland Rail Authority to fund and implement rail and transit projects through revenue generated by Maryland's existing toll facilities that are in excess of road maintenance needs. The new Authority would have its own bonding capacity, which would allow it to issue bonds backed by excess toll revenue.

The Maryland Rail Authority is designed to be flexible so that it can work in partnership with the Maryland Transit Administration or be responsible for financing, construction, and operation of new rail and transit projects. The first projects would be to:

- Extend MARC commuter rail service to Newark, Delaware, Northern Virginia, and Western Maryland;
- Replace the Baltimore & Potomac Tunnel with the new Douglass Tunnel;
- Construct the Southern Maryland Rapid Transit System; and
- Improve the existing Brunswick, Camden, and Penn commuter rail lines.

It is clear that Maryland desperately needs more funds for transit and a dedicated authority to implement it. HB1324 complements Delegate Solomon's HB778 that capitalizes on federal resources for the MARC Cornerstone Plan and regional rail service.

We urge the Committee to recommend a **FAVORABLE** report for HB1324 so that we can vastly improve Maryland's rail and transit infrastructure.

MLC Climate Justice Wing:

Assateague Coastal Trust
Maryland Legislative Coalition
MD Campaign for Environmental Human Rights
Chesapeake Climate Action Network
WISE
Frack Free Frostburg
Mountain Maryland Movement

Howard County Indivisible
Howard County Sierra Club
Columbia Association Climate Change and Sustainability Advisory Committee
HoCo Climate Action
CHEER
Climate XChange - Maryland
Mid-Atlantic Field Representative/
National Parks Conservation Association
350 Montgomery County
Glen Echo Heights Mobilization
The Climate Mobilization Montgomery County
Montgomery County Faith Alliance for Climate Solutions
Montgomery Countryside Alliance
Takoma Park Mobilization Environment Committee
Audubon Naturalist Society
Cedar Lane Unitarian Universalist Church
Environmental Justice Ministry
Coalition For Smarter Growth
DoTheMostGood Montgomery County
MCPS Clean Energy Campaign
MoCo DCC

Potomac Conservancy
Casa de Maryland
Nuclear Information & Resource Service
Clean Air Prince Georges
Laurel Resist
Greenbelt Climate Action Network
Maryland League of Conservation Voters
Unitarian Universalist Legislative Ministry of Maryland
Concerned Citizens Against Industrial CAFOs
Wicomico NAACP
Chesapeake Physicians for Social Responsibility
Chispa MD
Climate Law & Policy Project
Maryland Poor People's Campaign
Labor Network for Sustainability
The Nature Conservancy
Clean Air Prince Georges
350 Baltimore
Maryland Environmental Health Network
Climate Stewards of Greater Annapolis
Talbot Rising
Adat Shalom Climate Action
Chesapeake Earth Holders
Climate Parents of Prince Georges
Echotopia
Maryland NAACP State Conference,
Environmental Justice Committee