

JOSH BOKEE - HOUSE BILL 0778 - FAVORABLE

Maryland Regional Rail Transformation Act - House bill 0778

My name is Josh Bokee and I am a resident of the City of Frederick. I am writing to support, as favorable, House Bill 0778, the Maryland Regional Rail Transformation Act.

In Frederick County, we are served by the MARC rail system via the Brunswick line, which connects Frederick, Montgomery and Washington, D.C. Long standing system constraints have prevented MARC service from fulfilling its true promise as a commuter transportation option as well as being a driver of economic growth that is more equitable and beneficial for all residents of the community.

House Bill 0778 is important because it would start the work that is needed to expand MARC service on the Brunswick line, making it frequent, practical and convenient. Requiring MTA, by FY 2023, to complete 30% of the needed design work for adding a third track on the Brunswick Line establishes a set bench marker from which the remaining design work, and eventually construction, can be budgeted and implemented. The third track, as well as station improvements at Brunswick, would add the capability to offer more frequent daily service between Frederick, Montgomery and Washington, DC and as crucially, weekend service (which does not exist today).

As a City of Frederick resident, I am thankful for the support and investments that the state of Maryland - and specifically the General Assembly - has made into our community. Many people are now familiar with the tremendous revival of downtown Frederick, which was made possible by state investments years ago into the flood control measures that protect the city today. Downtown Frederick is fast becoming known around the region as a destination for tourism, businesses and more.

Now we have the opportunity to build on these prior investments by connecting Frederick to the greater Washington metro area via regional rail service seven days a week - bringing more dollars into Maryland and the region while doing so.

Thank you for your consideration of HB 0778 and the opportunity to submit favorable testimony for it.