



TESTIMONY TO THE HOUSE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE

HB 778 Transportation - Investment Program - MARC Rail Service (Maryland Regional Rail Transformation Act)

POSITION: Support

BY: Nancy Soreng, LWVMD President

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The League of Women Voters of Maryland (LWVMD) supports proposed legislation HB 778 and the potential to expand MARC (Maryland Area Regional Commuter) rail line. We support transportation that is environmentally friendly and decreases the use of single occupancy vehicles.

By connecting the economies of our area by rail from Delaware, to Baltimore, to Frederick County to D.C. and Virginia, we can lift all economies. We don't know without reviewing current and potential rail transportation what is possible for regional growth, both the benefits and costs, including long and short term. We know that other regions of the country are exploring better rail connections to serve constituents.

This bill provides a rail plan to follow. Our rail system is often fragmented and disconnected among governmental entities regionally. We believe that governmental bodies should cooperate so everyone benefits. We should prioritize areas of need in making a plan, set goals, and schedule them accordingly.

The positions of LWVMD clearly say that the state government should help enable compliance with state goals. Our transportation systems should reflect local concerns, promote environmental protection, aid economic development, and encourage cooperative working relationships. Wise decisions are often difficult to make.

LWVMD promotes the use of mass transit and alternative travel modes to help abate the use of our natural resources and promote a healthier environment. It's incumbent on us to try new regional proposals that benefit the lives of Maryland residents and our environment. We urge a favorable report on HB 778.