

BARRY GLASSMAN
HARFORD COUNTY EXECUTIVE



LEONARD PARRISH
DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY AND
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
HARFORD TRANSIT LINK

Bill: House Bill 1019: Transportation – Elderly and Handicapped Transportation Service – County Funding

Position: SUPPORT

Dear Chair McIntosh, Vice-Chair Chang, and Members of the Committee:

I write on behalf of the Office of Community and Economic Development in Harford County, Maryland in support of House Bill 1019, which would place funding for the Statewide Specialized Transportation Assistance Program (SSTAP) on a more sustainable basis and provide protection from the continuing cost increases we face in providing community transportation.

Harford Transit Link is a division of the Office of Community and Economic Development, supporting both the success of our economy and the quality of life of our residents. Harford Transit Link serves our rural county, utilizing the SSTAP funding to serve those riders outside of the more developed communities. It is through this support that residents receive access to services, employment, and social connections that contribute to their overall mental and physical wellbeing.

The SSTAP program is a crucial tool intended to make mobility a reality for elderly and handicapped Marylanders. Unfortunately, funding for this program has remained flat for the past 18 years. The senior population is the fastest growing segment of our population, and demand for the services funded by this program has continued to grow beyond the flat funding. With increased operating costs, flat funding is essentially a funding cut. In FY21 our organization received \$170,371, which was only 20% of the total amount our agency spent on these vital transportation services.

Providing mobility to our aging populations and residents with disabilities enables them to access medical care, community services, and the basic necessities to maintain or improve their quality of life. Without access to these services, many seniors would be forced into nursing homes, representing an average per person annual cost increase of over \$1,700 dollars to Medicare/Medicaid over those who receive other services to ensure that they may age in place.

We fully support House Bill 1019's efforts to increase support for the mobility of the senior citizens and disabled persons we serve and ensure the quality of life for those aging in place.

Sincerely,

Leonard Parrish
Director
Office of Community and Economic Development

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