

**March 08, 2022**

**Testimony - HB1336 - Greater Baltimore Transit  
Governance and Funding Commission \_  
Appropriations**

**Organization: Cedar Lane Environmental Justice  
Ministry (CLEJM)**

**Submitting: Lee McNair, Co-Leader**

**Position: FAVORABLE**

**CLEJM is a faith-based Unitarian Universalist organization. As such, we analyze decisions, structures, needs, and actions according to our principles among which are a belief in the inherent worth and dignity of all people; in justice, equity, and compassion for all life; in the right to use of the democratic process for everyone in this interdependent web of life that we share.**

**The citizens and residents of the Greater Baltimore region are in need of AND deserving of a safe, effective, reliable, and affordable mode of public transportation. The centralized governance structure of the Maryland Transit Administration (MTA) has not resulted in that reliable, safe, we'll-maintained transportation system.**

**MTA buses and trains have some of the highest**

**breakdown rates in the nation and the last time there was any expansion of this system was in 1997, more than 20 years ago! Furthermore, the governance of this transit agency is unique and apparently uniquely unworkable. Of the 50 largest transit agencies in the country, MTA is the only one among state departments of transportation with no local input, no board of directors and where decision-making relies solely on a governor who surely has enough to do without taking on the complexities of building, maintaining, and operating a transit system!**

**This unreliable transit system adds a terrible burden to users already weighed down by the adverse affects of poverty and structural racism. In addition, the failure of a reliable transportation system impacts the growth and competitiveness of the entire region which, in turn, impacts the economy of the entire state.**

**HB1336 creates a governance and funding commission representative of state and regional stakeholders who can determine the answers to the question of how best to create an equitable, workable, success-driven new Baltimore Regional, Transportation Authority. The findings of this Commission can then enable the General Assembly to draft legislation that will authorize the reality of a governing transit structure that will provide healthy oversight and accountability resulting in a improved and expanding transit system opening the way to**

**expanded local and federal transit funds, economic regional growth, and equitable transit services to the residents, workers, and visitors of the Greater Baltimore Region.**

**CLEJM supports HB1336 and urges a FAVORABLE report from the committee. Thank you for this opportunity to share our thoughts with you.**