



Olivia Bartlett, DoTheMostGood Maryland Team

Committee: Appropriations

Testimony on: HB0778 – Transportation – Investment Program – MARC Rail Service (Maryland Regional Rail Transformation Act)

Position: Favorable

Hearing Date: February 17, 2022

Bill Contact: Delegate Jared Solomon

DoTheMostGood (DTMG) is a progressive grass-roots organization with more than 3000 members in all districts in Montgomery County as well as in several nearby jurisdictions. DTMG supports legislation and activities that keep its members healthy and safe in a clean environment and which promote equity across all our diverse communities. DTMG strongly supports HB0778 because offering better rail service and connections in the DC regional area is vital for achieving Maryland's greenhouse gas emission reduction goals.

Scientists are delivering increasingly urgent warnings that we must rapidly and dramatically reduce emission of greenhouse gases in order to limit global warming and avoid the most devastating impacts of climate change. Transportation accounts for a large percentage of greenhouse gas emissions in Maryland and is largely due to commuters in individual cars. Virtually all recommendations for reducing greenhouse gas emissions include decreased use of individual cars and increased use of mass transit for commuting. Many commuters – particularly those from far outlying communities -- would like other ways to get to work and avoid the stress of driving in traffic. Commuting by rail would allow commuters to work, read, knit, sleep, or relax and prepare for their workday.

However, currently available rail service is not adequate for commuters who would like other ways to get to work. MARC trains run on limited schedules only during the morning and evening rush hours, so parents with kids in school, people who work partial days or irregular hours, and anyone who needs to get home for mid-day deliveries or appointments cannot now use MARC trains.

HB0778 directly addresses this problem and pressing need for better commuter rail service in Maryland. HB0788 requires the Maryland Transit Administration (MTA) to establish individual investment programs to advance the MARC Cornerstone Plan and other MARC improvements by providing incremental enhancements and improved service for the existing Brunswick, Camden, and Penn lines. In addition, MTA will be required to study new regional service between Perryville, Maryland and Newark, Delaware, new regional run-through rail service to Alexandria, Virginia; and extending the Brunswick line to better serve western Maryland.

These improvements in regional commuter rail services will allow more people to use mass transit to get to work, appointments, entertainment, and friends without using their cars – thereby reducing greenhouse gas emissions. These improvements will also unify the region.

Therefore, DTMG strongly supports these common-sense measures to improve rail service in the region and urges a **FAVORABLE** report on HB0778.

Respectfully submitted,

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