



February 17, 2022

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**SUPPORT: HB778 - Regional Rail Transformation Act**

Madame Chair and Members of the Committees

Maryland LCV supports HB778: Regional Rail Transformation Act, and we thank Senator Beidle for her leadership on this issue.

Maryland LCV works at the intersection of strong climate policy and environmental justice. This bill supports both of those interests.

In order to confront the climate crisis, Maryland must take aggressive action to reduce the emissions from the transportation sector, which remains the single largest contributor to our state's climate solution.

Last year, the General Assembly passed, and overrode the veto of, the Transit Safety and Investment Act, which would provide sufficient funding to bring our state's fleet of buses, trains, light rails, and subways to a state of good repair. This year, you have the opportunity to take additional acts to address transportation pollution, including efforts to electrify our state fleet of cars and trucks, incentives to citizens to move away from traditional gas-powered automobiles, as well as an innovative plan to allow counties to electrify their school bus fleet through partnering with utility companies.

SB514 is an important component of this suite of legislation, aimed to invest in and expand service operation of Maryland's public transit fleet to underserved areas of the state, and create greater connectivity to neighboring states.

By strengthening and expanding our public transit system, HB778 will help to encourage Marylanders to reduce their reliance on privately owned automobiles, reducing both traffic congestion and emissions. Importantly, it will also expand job opportunities for lower-income Marylanders who rely solely on public transit to get to work, school, medical appointments, and groceries.

Maryland LCV strongly urges a favorable report on this important bill.