



**HB778-Transportation Investment Program-MARC Rail Service-Maryland
Regional Rail Transformation Act
Testimony before
House Appropriations Committee
February 17, 2022
Position: Favorable**

Chair McIntosh, Vice-Chair Chang and Members of the Committee, my name is Carol O’Keeffe and I am writing on behalf of the 750+ members of Indivisible Howard County, an active member of the Maryland Legislation Coalition (with 30,000) members) in support of **HB778** which would require the Maryland Transit Administration (MTA) to make significant investments to improve Maryland’s commuter rail system.

The Maryland Area Commuter Rail (MARC) service created an excellent vision for MARC service in the Cornerstone Plane, but a plan is only as good as the will to invest to implement its vision. MARC has 38 stations, three lines (Penn, Camden, Brunswick) and in 2019 had more than 9 million riders. As the region emerges from the pandemic, it is critical that additional investments are made to incrementally improve MARC service and to expand its role as a vital link to the District of Columbia and Virginia. Transit is essential to accessible, inclusive and sustainable mobility for the region and is an accelerator of economic growth, but it must be reliable and accessible to attract and maintain riders.

HB778 requires the (MTA) to establish individual investment programs both for capital expenditures, planning purposes and staff needs beginning in FY2023 to be updated every five fiscal years for improvements to the existing three lines. The ultimate goal is to work with Delaware, Pennsylvania, the District of Columbia, Amtrak, and CSX to achieve a seamless, interconnected regional transit network.

The additional investments will position the MTA to compete for the \$66 Billion in funding that will be available through the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act.

We respectfully urge a favorable committee report
Carol O'Keeffe
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