
February 17, 2022

The Honorable Maggie McIntosh
Chair, House Appropriations Committee
121 House Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

***RE: Letter of Information – House Bill 778 – Transportation – Investment Program –
MARC Rail Service (Maryland Regional Rail Transformation Act)***

Dear Chair McIntosh and Committee Members:

The Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) takes no position on House Bill 778 but offers the following information for the Committee's consideration.

House Bill 778 requires the MDOT Maryland Transit Administration (MDOT MTA) to complete design and operational modeling work on projects that do not currently have confirmation as viable concepts from the railroads that own the affected infrastructure. The MDOT MTA appreciates the intent of House Bill 778 and is in the process of implementing the objectives included in the legislation.

The MDOT MTA would like to note for the Committee that it has engaged in discussions with the bill sponsor about areas of concern in the bill, as well as shared goals.

Each of the projects and service extensions included in House Bill 778 are included in the MARC Cornerstone Plan, the Regional Transit Plan, or the Statewide Transit Plan. The MDOT MTA continues to further detail and advance each of these efforts through the Brunswick Line Master Plan, continuing negotiations and studies for service extensions, involvement in Northeast Corridor Commission (NECC) planning, and a variety of project studies and ridership analyses. Agreement to concept plans and concepts of service by the host railroads need to be reached before projects can be advanced into preliminary design. In many cases, host railroads will not share proprietary information on their operations for modeling or allow the MDOT MTA to access the railroad right-of-way to collect data needed for design before reaching agreement and support for the project.

Additionally, MARC operates as a system and it is critical to continue planning for investment in MARC as a system, rather than as six separate programs. Investments in railcars, locomotives, storage and maintenance, administration, and service benefit all of MARC. Underinvestment in any of these items puts service reliability and state of good repair for the whole MARC system at risk.

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Furthermore, the Brunswick and Camden Lines are both owned by CSX and part of the same access agreement, and therefore receive joint investment in infrastructure and state of good repair projects and cannot be separated.

Finally, the MDOT MTA is committed to reducing the State of Good Repair Backlog, which is over \$1.5 billion across all modes. Ninety-six percent of MDOT MTA's FY22-27 CTP funding is dedicated to state of good repair projects. Significantly increasing investments in expansion as mandated in House Bill 778 could put critical safety investments in state of good repair at risk as House Bill 778 does not propose a new funding or revenue source.

The MDOT currently budgets funds on a six-year timeframe and outlines total funds and projects in the Consolidated Transportation Program (CTP). The CTP is established after extensive consultation with Maryland's citizens, local jurisdictions and the local and State delegations, and those projects that preserve transportation system investments, enhance transportation services, and expand transportation opportunities throughout the State are added to the CTP. A strength of the CTP is the flexibility to move funds in order meet certain demands and the MDOT requires this flexibility without the restrictions of mandated appropriations. While the MARC needs are important, they must be considered in the context of MDOT's need to maintain critical infrastructure across Maryland's entire transportation system, including transit, port, and airport facilities.

The Maryland Department of Transportation respectfully requests the Committee consider this information when deliberating House Bill 778.

Respectfully submitted,

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