

February 25, 2022

Appropriations Committee  
House Office Building, Room 121  
Annapolis, MD 21401

Environment and Transportation Committee  
House Office Building, Room 251  
Annapolis, MD 21401

**HB 1324, Transportation - Maryland Rail Authority - Establishment (Maryland Rail Investment Act of 2022) (Support)**

**Testimony for March 8, 2022**

**Jane Lyons, Maryland Advocacy Manager**

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on HB 1324, the Maryland Rail Investment Act of 2022. Please accept this testimony on behalf of the Coalition for Smarter Growth, the leading organization advocating for walkable, bikeable, inclusive, transit-oriented communities as the most sustainable and equitable way for the Washington, DC region to grow and provide opportunities for all.

We strongly support the Maryland Rail Investment Act of 2022, which would establish the Maryland Rail Authority to fund and implement rail and transit projects through the use of revenue from Maryland's existing toll facilities, in excess of road maintenance needs. Importantly, the new Authority would be able to issue its own bonds, and could be responsible for financing, construction, or operation of new rail and transit projects.

Marylanders have been waiting many years for a more extensive and improved rail system, but so far the state has failed to deliver on its plans for extending MARC service; replacing the B&P tunnel; extending transit to Southern Maryland; and providing more frequent, reliable service on existing commuter rail lines. Investments in rail are also investments in economic growth, transit equity, and green infrastructure.

Optimal tolling — an approach adopted by New Jersey, New York, and Pennsylvania — is key to realize the full costs of driving and combating climate change through more efficient transportation modes. We have seen the limitations of heavily relying on a private partner through the Purple Line process, and it is time to try a different approach.

Thus, we urge you to support a robust, reliable transportation system by giving HB 1324 a favorable report. Thank you for your consideration.