

**Budget and Taxation Committee of the Senate**

**Testimony on:** SB0359: State Finance -

**Prohibited Appropriations -** Magnetic Levitation Transportation System

Submitting: Elizabeth Tobey

**Position:** Favorable

**Hearing Date:** 2.9.2022

To the Honorable Chair Guzzone and all the members of the Senate Budget and Taxation Committee:

I am writing in favor of SB0359 for the following reasons:

- The SCMaglev project would take federal and municipally-owned open space by eminent domain, include one-half of the City of Greenbelt's Forest Preserve, valuable agricultural research farmland of the USDA's Beltsville Agricultural Research Center, and sections of the Patuxent National Wildlife Refuge. Allowing a private company to seize public land for its economic gain sets a dangerous precedent. In addition, the tunneling and deforestation will threaten wildlife habitat, including bald eagle nesting sites.
- As a homeowner in the GHI Coop in Old Greenbelt situated a half-mile from the proposed tunnel entrance, I am also concerned about the noise, vibration, erosion, and traffic that would occur during the construction of the tunnel and could damage homes in the community.
- Building the Maglev is projected to cost at least \$16-20 billion dollars. Our state will not be able to cover such a high expense, especially when there are projects already in progress (such as the building of the Purple Line) that need funding for completion. Maglev is a luxury transportation project geared towards an affluent ridership who can spend \$60 per ticket. Taxpayer money is better spent on the Purple Line or expanding MARC and Amtrak train service which serve working and middle-class Maryland commuters.
- The pandemic has already changed the way businesses and organizations do business. During the past couple years, many businesses have shifted activities that previously occurred in-person to virtual meetings. Job interviews, meetings, and even entire conferences now take place online. Therefore, there will be much less need in the coming years for intercity business travel.

Thank you for your consideration of these points. While I am in favor of state spending on transportation and infrastructure projects, I think the State of Maryland needs to invest its money wisely and projects that benefit the largest number of Marylanders of all income brackets. Let's support the completion of the Purple Line and expand and improve MARC and Amtrak service. But do not let Maryland get conned into funding SCMaglev, a project which would benefit only a small number of wealthy individuals!

Sincerely,

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