

Budget and Taxation Committee of the Senate

Testimony on: SB0359: State Finance - Prohibited Appropriations - Magnetic Levitation Transportation System

Submitting: Patricia Jackman

Position: Favorable

Hearing Date: 02.09.2022

To the Honorable Chair Guzzone and all the members of the Senate Budget and Taxation Committee, and sponsoring Senators [Pinsky](#) and [Beidle](#):

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

Economic:

The Maglev is projected to cost at least 16-20 billion dollars (and likely more). Maryland will not be able to cover such an expense and still maintain the essential maintenance and upgrades of transportation and infrastructure projects throughout its districts. In reality, there will be enormous costs that will eventually accrue to us taxpayers because of the inevitable cost overruns.

What is so ridiculous is the Maglev is considered a “luxury” transit option; economically not feasible, nor accessible to the residents along its path. This discrepancy was made clear in the research and opposition comments made on the Draft Environmental Impacts Statement (DEIS). Therefore, it makes sense that **no state funding be allocated** for the high ticket priced and limited service this project would provide, if it is ever completed.

Climate Change Mitigation:

The State needs to prepare for the changing scenarios the impending Climate Crisis will create for how we work, travel and live. We need to carefully attend to the footprint of projects that the state funds.

Based on recent research, the construction of the SCMaglev will generate more greenhouse gases than it will save for likely several decades. We do not have decades to wait for such a “possibility.” In addition, the project will destroy hundreds of acres of contiguous tree canopy including a forest preserve, wetlands and wildlife refuge all of which are needed for CO2 storage, clean air and water, and climate cooling.

I have been an advocate for restoration of the Anacostia River and improving the Chesapeake Bay. This project would have been a disaster to the Bay’s watersheds (Anacostia, Patuxent) and tributaries, impeding Maryland’s efforts and funds directed for Clean Water Act compliance.

We depend on MD leadership to guide government policy and funding toward mitigations to address and reverse climate change impacts. **No state funding should be allocated** to a project that does not align with energy conservation efforts and generates such destructive and irreversible environmental impacts.

Pandemic induced change:

I remind you that the BWMaglev and the DEIS never clearly verified ridership projections. See the following research: Dr. Owen Kelley’s Analysis of Ridership: <https://www.greenbeltonline.org/maglev-ridership> .

Nor did the DEIS consider the pandemic's impacts on transportation for commuting. The State needs to analyze how the changes brought on by the pandemic will impact the need for various transit systems given the quick adaptation that has been made to virtual meetings. The current pandemic has demonstrated the resourcefulness of our various institutions. Traditional practices for every type of organization, business, school, etc., have been challenged and shifted dramatically.

The DEIS data never proved that the Maglev would have the ridership needed to generate revenue. Now we are in the midst of a pandemic. I predict the costly Maglev will be underutilized and outdated technology too soon. Maryland should preserve funds for improving the current train infrastructure (Amtrak, MARC) and maintaining our roads and bridges.

No state funding should be allocated to a project that is not resilient and keeping abreast of the witnessed cultural and economic changes to transportation needs.

Thank you for your consideration of these points. In light of these crucial issues, I believe the state is correct to protect its transportation and infrastructure funding for necessary (not luxury) and usable projects. The State needs to be prepared to adapt quickly, practically and effectively to serve the needs of the whole state, not those of a few.

Sincerely,
Patricia Jackman
5813 Lamont Drive
New Carrollton, MD 20784