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Health and Government Operations
Committee

Chair

Government Operations and
Health Facilities Subcommittee

House Chair

Joint Committee on Administrative,
Executive, and Legislative Review



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Testimony of Delegate Samuel I. Rosenberg
Before the Senate Budget and Taxation Committee
In Support of House Bill 632

Baltimore East -West Corridor - Transit Study - Requirements

"A developed country is not a place where the poor have cars. It's where the rich use public transportation."

Gustavo Petro

Mister Chairman and Members of the Committee:

Every year Americans take hundreds of millions of commuter line trips to work, school, medical appointments, and any number of other destinations. Public transportation is vital for individuals who cannot drive due to age, disability or economic situation.

Prospective homeowners often favor property that is closer to rail stops, and corporations are drawn to rail lines to take advantage of the local work force.¹ Microsoft donated \$300,000 to study the feasibility of a rail system between Seattle and Vancouver based on an economic feasibility assessment that concluded it would create another 145,000 jobs in the Puget Sound region.²

Maryland has long been supportive of public transportation. House Bill 632 is comparable in many ways to House Bill 300 that passed both chambers by wide margins in 2015, requiring a study of Washington DC area public transportation be performed every five years. Last year Senate Bill 97 also passed by wide majorities, allocating funds to promote the Purple Line.

¹ <https://www.gao.gov/products/gao-21-355r>

² <https://blogs.microsoft.com/on-the-issues/2018/05/10/next-generation-washington-spring-2018-update/>

Federal funding to revive the Red Line was made possible by our Congressional delegation. Language was added to the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act requiring the Secretary of the US Department of Transportation to “provide full and fair consideration to projects that seek an updated rating after a period of inactivity following an earlier rating and evaluation.”

By performing updated studies and surveys, the state will have the information we need to make the best decisions for our future. In their testimony to the House Appropriations Committee, the Maryland Department of Transportation acknowledged that shifting environmental factors, the cost of additional or expanded MARC stations and changes in travel habits have all occurred since the original planning of the Red Line and are not fully understood or quantified. This bill will ensure those variables are measured while mandating that due consideration be given to already completed engineering and environmental surveys, which will reduce both time and cost. Finally, the bill codifies that no one will lose their home in order to construct a new rail system.

This bill is an important step towards working for a cleaner and more prosperous future. I urge a favorable report.

March 29, 2022