

AMALGAMATED TRANSIT UNION LOCAL 689

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Statement of the Amalgamated Transit Union (ATU) Local 689

SB23 - Equity in Transportation Sector - Guidelines and Analyses

HB141 - Equity in Transportation Sector - Guidelines and Analyses

January 24th, 2022

TO: The Honorable Delores G. Kelley and Members of the Senate Finance Committee

TO: The Honorable Kumar P. Barve and Members of the Environment and Transportation Committee

FROM: Brian Wivell, Political & Communications Director, ATU Local 689

ATU Local 689 strongly supports SB23/HB141 - Equity in Transportation Sector - Guidelines and Analyses and urges the House Environment and Transportation Committee to issue a favorable report.

At the Amalgamated Transit Union Local 689 we represent over 15,000 transit workers and retirees performing many skilled transportation crafts for the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA), MetroAccess, DASH, and DC Streetcar among others. Our union helped turn low-wage, exploitative transit jobs into transit careers. We became an engine for the middle-class of this region.

We know firsthand that access to reliable, safe and affordable public transit means better jobs and a stronger economy. Access to high quality public transit isn't just about commute times and access to jobs, it's also about building sustainable communities. Public transit is the lifeblood of many neighborhoods and it's important that we're intentional about the impacts that changes to public transit will have on the communities that already live there. This country has repeatedly treated public transit, particularly buses, as if it was transportation for people of color and the poor. As such, it has been chronically underfunded and sidelined for the promotion of personal automobiles. We believe that SB23/HB 141 will help to make this past history explicit, especially its past racial impacts, and help prevent the State of Maryland from repeating history.

Transit equity is something that this union has fought for over and over again. We've repeatedly been on the front lines of fights against service cuts and for the expansion of public transit. We also routinely partner with the Labor Network for Sustainability and a host of other organizations to support their annual Transit Equity Day. Our members have spoken at community meetings, public hearings, and rallies. We know transit workers have a role to play in helping to promote transit equity because they already have.

SB23/HB141 has been updated since last year to recognize the role that transit workers play in the fight for transit equity by including them in the process, placing a transit labor organization representative on the advisory committee.

We thank Senator Carter & Delegate Ruth for continuing to fight for this important issue and urge the committee to issue a favorable report.