

## Environment and Transportation Committee of the House

**Testimony on:** HB0326: State Finance - Prohibited Appropriations - Magnetic Levitation Transportation System

**Submitting:** Catherine Plaisant

**Position:** Favorable

**Hearing Date:** 2.17.2022

To the Honorable Chair Barve and all members of the Environment and Transportation Committee:

I support [HB0326](#) because magnetic levitation transportation is a long-rejected impractical technology which – compared to traditional high-speed trains - has no environmental benefits, and lack the flexibility needed in order to improve the connectivity of the transportation network.

My specific comments are inevitably connected to the recently proposed MAGLEV project, as an example of the best that transportation engineers could do with a magnetic levitation transportation system.

### 1) Connectivity

**Magnetic levitation transportation systems are a bad choice because they are so inflexible - by design.** Lines cannot be shared with a regular train system, even for a few minutes to connect to existing stations. Their design is so rigid that they cannot use our available abandoned industrial land for train yards (and instead they will destroy the only pristine land left in the area). **Good trains enhance the connectivity of networks, a magnetic levitation transportation system would not.**

### 2) Emissions / Energy use

The Federal Railroad Administration found that operating the Proposed Baltimore-Washington Maglev would **increase greenhouse gas emissions**. Compared to the traditional trains (including the standard high-speed trains in used today in the rest of the world) a **magnetic levitation system is an energy hog**.

In addition, the destruction of wild land, reduced carbon sequestration, destruction of streams, pollution of ground water from tunnels, noise pollution, etc. will more than counterbalance the benefit of taking a relatively small number of additional cars removed the road.

### 3) Safety

**The safety record of Maglev technology is non-existent**, despite being an old technology. The MAGLEV project is like a Boeing 737 MAX, ready for a fiasco. In addition, we have quickly forgotten that terrorism LOVES such high-profile vulnerabilities.

4) Jobs

Just like the vast majority of the comments I have heard in favor of MAGLEV are **generic to any** expensive transportation project. **“Life changing” jobs can be created with more practical and equitable technologies.**

5) Ridership estimates:

See attached report.

The number of people driving every day from downtown DC to Downtown Baltimore is actually very small. Their impact on the overall daily peak-hour congestion on our highways is quite limited. **The estimated ridership of the MAGLEV project is extrapolated from a very small number of actual recorded origin-destination trips and therefore highly uncertain.**

On the other hand, any magnetic transportation system between DC and Baltimore WILL, with absolute certainty:

- Reduce of quality of life for a large number of Marylanders
- Annihilate critical forests and wetlands
- Bulldoze over public lands which should be protected
- Divert funding for the public transportation we use and need to get to work.
- Worsen environmental justice if built between DC and Baltimore.

**The impact on new lines on our natural environment is clear: a very bad, for sure, forever:**

I know the Greenbelt Preserve, BARC, the Patuxent wildlife refuge. I have seen the minks, the BROOK lampreys, the rare plants directly threatened by this project. They are the only remaining large, connected forests we have in the region. All train yard options of the MAGLEV project are deliberately placed smack in the middle of it. It is an absurd design with complete disrespect for our environment and the health and future of MD citizens.

Refuse to pay for Magnetic Levitation Transportation Systems, **instead** I hope the general assembly will focus on improving and **improve existing infrastructures to improve their capacity.**

**What we need is advanced signal timing, improved agency coordination, faster incident response, reliable predictions, etc.**

To close, I will relate an example of my experience with MD public transportation:

Working at the University of Maryland when I take the close-by MARC train in College Park, an old diesel train arrives, a conductor opens one door and comes down with a stool for passengers to use. This is slow, polluting, 19th century transportation. Marc is supposed to be improved, but instead we can traumatically revamp the MARC trains and lines, improve capacity, add direct service, and attract many new commuters.

Please reject Magnetic Levitation Transportation Systems, like others have done repeatedly over the world, for good reasons.

Thank you

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