



**TESTIMONY PRESENTED TO THE HOUSE ENVIRONMENT AND TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE**

**HOUSE BILL 141 – EQUITY IN TRANSPORTATION SECTOR - GUIDELINES AND ANALYSES**

**Sponsor – Delegate Sheila Ruth**

**January 27, 2022**

**DONALD C. FRY**

**PRESIDENT & CEO**

**GREATER BALTIMORE COMMITTEE**

**Position: Support with Amendment**

House Bill 141 requires that equity be considered when certain State transportation plans, reports, and goals are developed; establishes a new Commission on Transportation Equity; requires the Maryland Department of Transportation to conduct equity analyses and consult with certain communities before announcing or proposing transit service changes; and requires the Administration to take actions to avoid or minimize disparate impacts or disproportionate burdens.

The Greater Baltimore Committee’s (GBC) focus on advancing racial equity and social justice includes a commitment to review all legislative proposals through an equity lens and to consider the impacts of proposed legislation on small and minority owned businesses, minority populations, and economically disadvantaged residents. Through this work, it has become apparent that the lack of equitable transportation options has had negative impacts on the State’s competitive business environment. At a time when businesses are struggling to find employees, there are entire neighborhoods whose residents are cut off from reasonable transportation options.

The GBC 2022 Legislative Strategy specifically calls for the following:

**Call for modifications/enhancements to the transportation scoring process to include:**

- **Prioritize funding for projects that provide enhanced multimodal connectivity to major workforce and distribution centers.**
- **Prioritize mass transit projects that address equity issues, particularly improved mass transit options in underserved neighborhoods.**

This bill is also consistent with a key tenet in *Gaining the Competitive Edge: Keys to Economic Growth and Job Creation in Maryland*, a report published by the GBC that identifies eight core pillars for a competitive business environment and job growth.

**Superior transportation infrastructure with reliable funding mechanisms.** An essential prerequisite of a competitive business environment includes well-funded and maintained highway, transit, port and airport infrastructure that provides reliable and efficient options to move people, goods and services.

The GBC does respectfully suggest an amendment to the membership of the new proposed Commission on Transportation Equity by adding a member representing the business community. The business community has a unique perspective on the impact of the lack of transportation options to connect potential employees with job centers and other workplaces, and the voice of the business community would be a valuable addition to the commission membership.

**GREATER BALTIMORE COMMITTEE**

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**For these reasons, the Greater Baltimore Committee urges a favorable report on House Bill 141, with the amendment outlined above.**

*The Greater Baltimore Committee (GBC) is a non-partisan, independent, regional business advocacy organization comprised of hundreds of businesses -- large, medium and small -- educational institutions, nonprofit organizations and foundations located in Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Carroll, Harford, and Howard counties as well as Baltimore City. The GBC is a 67-year-old, private-sector membership organization with a rich legacy of working with government to find solutions to problems that negatively affect our competitiveness and viability.*