



January 27, 2022

The Honorable Kumar P. Barve

Chair, House Environment and Transportation Committee

MD General Assembly

251 House Office Building

6 Bladen Street

Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: HB 120 Railroad Companies - Condemnation Authority - Application

POSITION: OPPOSE

Dear Chairman Barve,

I am writing to outline our strong opposition to HB 120.

Even as one of the newest Black chambers of commerce in Maryland and in the Washington Metropolitan region, we have earned a well-deserved reputation as a voice for growth in Prince George's County. Through our aggressive pursuit of a healthy economic climate for business and an improved quality of life for County residents, our mission is to advance the interests of business and help create wealth for a vibrant Prince George's County. This proposed legislation serves to stand against our core goals, and against our mission.

This bill aims to revoke the authority of eminent domain from Baltimore Washington Rapid Rail - a rightful railroad franchise -for the sole purpose of stopping the project. Yet, the authors of this legislation fail to see that by attempting to stop a single project, they severely limit the future use of a safe and viable transportation technology in the State of Maryland. This legislation only serves to send a message to the world that Maryland does not want to be part of a future where we finally begin to move beyond constantly building and expanding highways.

Not only does construction of the SCMAGLEV represent 74,000 Maryland jobs related to construction operations, it represents over 1500 permanent jobs as well as thousands more in local supporting industries, businesses, and contract opportunities. We recognize that a project of this nature is larger than just our county. It represents job opportunities, business opportunities, and community growth and development opportunities for millions along the Northeast Corridor. It represents a future with less pollution, traffic, and with an emphasis on clean, efficient transportation and transit-oriented development. We believe that Prince George's County, and the State of Maryland should be a part of this future.

This bill is an attempt to needlessly block a potential for growth and opportunity for so many, and we ask that you submit an unfavorable report. We recommend that the Maryland Legislature let the normal regulatory and legal processes in place work unimpeded, and not set a precedent by using legislation on behalf of a few to unfairly limit a potential good for many.

Sincerely,

Jerry McLaurin

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J McLaurin', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

President

PFC Black Chamber of Commerce Inc

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