

SB0023, Equity in Transportation Sector - Guidelines and Analyses
Testimony in **Support**

To: Chair Kelley and members of the Senate Finance Committee
From: Arielle Juberg

My name is Arielle Juberg. I am a resident of Baltimore County in District 8. I belong to Showing Up for Racial Justice in Baltimore. I am testifying in **support** of SB0023, Equity in Transportation Sector - Guidelines and Analyses.

SB0023 would establish a Commission to study and develop effective policies and performance measures to enforce equitable practices to our state's transportation system. I use the Baltimore light rail and subway to reach my job and special events like Orioles games. Beyond my own use, I'm testifying because of deep concern about the impact of unequal transportation options for people with disabilities and people of color.

Before access to education, public buildings, and public transportation was protected by law, people with disabilities could not fully participate in public life. This alienation is a shameful part of our past that we cannot return to. Transportation equity is essential to people with disabilities. Because many people with disabilities do not have the option to drive cars, lack of access to other modes of transportation disproportionately harms them. Without access to transportation, people with disabilities can be alienated from the economic mainstream. People with disabilities are twice as likely to live in poverty in part due to difficulty accessing jobs, education and medical care.

Maryland has a shamefully long history of racist transportation policies, from highways built through and dividing Black and Brown communities to the cancellation of the Red Line route, which would have provided urgently-needed access to jobs for residents in low-income, redlined communities in Baltimore and regional economy-transforming, transit-oriented-development (TOD). Today, there is a need for greater transparency, accountability and community input. Equity must be central to all planning and decisions throughout the process. Equitable transportation will play a key role in dismantling systemic racism by increasing access to good jobs, schools, education, and healthy food; providing incentives for community economic development; and reducing smog, air pollution, and heat islands, which disproportionately impact Black communities

Last year, in response to record low ridership due to the pandemic, the Maryland Transit Administration (MTA) proposed to eliminate 25 Baltimore bus lines. This proposal would have affected mostly Black neighborhoods and Black essential workers who still needed to show up to their job each day, with the bus as their only transit option. This is a recent example of why we need SB0023.

I strongly encourage you to **support** SB0023 so we can put in place policies that will ensure MTA can no longer implement changes in transportation service without considering the impact to Black and Brown workers and people with disabilities. Thank you for your time, consideration, and service.