

Testimony Supporting SB0023
Senate Finance Committee
January 26, 2022

Position: SUPPORT

Dear Chair and Members of the Committee,

The undersigned 36 organizations urge a favorable report on SB23, the Transportation Equity Act sponsored by Senator Carter.

Maryland has a shamefully long history of racist transportation policies, from highways built through and dividing Black 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). Equitable transportation will play a key role in dismantling systemic racism by:

- Increasing access to good jobs, schools, education, and food;
- Providing incentives for community economic development;
- Reducing smog, air pollution, and heat islands, which disproportionately impact Black communities

Only by being intentional about equity in the transportation sector can we begin to dismantle centuries of systemic racism.

Because many people with disabilities and many low-income households do not have access to cars, lack of access to other modes of transportation disproportionately harms them. Without access to transportation, people with disabilities continue to 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. Because many individuals with disabilities have increased health care needs, isolation can have a profound impact on quality of life, health, and safety. The Transportation Equity Act requires data collection and analysis of the impact of transportation on people with disabilities, and adds a representative of Disability Rights Maryland to the Commission on Transportation Equity created in the bill.

The Transportation Equity Act:

- Makes equity a primary goal in the Maryland Transportation Plan;
- Requires MDOT to annually report data on racial disparities and impact on persons with disabilities;

- Adds representatives from the Maryland State Conference NAACP and a transportation labor organization to the Attainment Advisory Committee;
- Creates a Commission on Transportation Equity as an independent body responsible for developing policies, guidelines, assurances, and performance measures to ensure an equitable transportation system;
- Requires transit equity analyses, cost benefit analysis, and outreach to affected communities before public hearings on any major service change;
- Requires cross-modal analysis;
- Increases transparency with annual reporting and service change analysis reporting

Equity should not be an afterthought or a box to check. Real people's lives are impacted by transportation. All Marylanders, regardless of race, income, zip code, or disability, should have an equal right to the benefits of a well-planned transportation system. We urge you to support SB23 to make this vision a reality.

Sincerely,

Clean Water Action

Emily Ranson, Maryland Director

Maryland Legislative Coalition

Cecilia Plante, Co-Chair

WISE (Women Indivisible Strong Effective)

Monica O'Connor, Legislative Liaison

Unitarian Universalist Legislative Ministry of Maryland

Phil Webster, Chair, Climate Change Task Force

Chesapeake Climate Action Network

Victoria Venable, Maryland Director

Our Revolution Maryland

Suchitra Balachandran, State Organizing Committee

Cedar Lane Unitarian Church

Kathleen Holmay, Environmental Justice Team

SURJ Baltimore

Jon Smeton, Legislative Team Lead

Our Revolution Baltimore City/County

Barrie Friedland, Co-chair

Takoma Park Mobilization Environment Committee

Diana Younts, Co-chair

Maryland League of Conservation Voters

Ramon Palencia-Calvo, Deputy Executive Director

Chesapeake Physicians for Social Responsibility

Gwen DuBois M.D., M.P.H., President

HoCo Climate Action

Ruth White, Steering Committee Member

Our Revolution, Howard County, MD

David LeGrande, Vice-Chair

Our Revolution Anne Arundel County Chapter

Arthur Holt, co-chair

Our Revolution Prince Georges

Suchitra Balachandran, ORPG Steering Committee

Our Revolution Montgomery County

Kathleen Uy, Co-chair

Indivisible Howard County

Richard Deutschmann, Co-Facilitator Climate Action Team

Echotopia LLC

Diane Wittner, Principal

Maryland Public Health Association

Raimee Eck, Advocacy Committee Co-chair

DoTheMostGood

Olivia Bartlett, Co-Lead, Maryland Team

Rebuild Maryland Coalition

Wandra Ashley-Williams, Director, CXC

MD Campaign for Environmental Human Rights

Nina Beth Cardin, Director

Locust Point Community Garden

Dave Arndt, Director

Indivisible Central Maryland

Liz Enagonio, Lead Organizer

Climate Parents of Prince George's

Joseph Jakuta, Lead Volunteer

Chesapeake Bay Foundation

Robin Clarke, Maryland Staff Attorney

Greenbelt Climate Action Network

Lore Rosenthal, Program Coordinator

Central Maryland Transportation Alliance

Eric Norton, Director of Policy & Programs

Blue Water Baltimore

Alice Volpitta, Baltimore Harbor Waterkeeper

Strong Future Maryland

Alice Wilkerson, Executive Director

Poor Peoples' Campaign

Carmella Gioio, Western Maryland Region

People On the Go Maryland

Ken Capone, Director

Baltimore County Progressive Democrats Club

Daniel Golombek, President

Baltimore City Green Party

Andy Ellis, Steering Committee

Coalition for Smarter Growth

Jane Lyons, Maryland Advocacy Manager