



TESTIMONY FOR SB0514

Transportation - Investment Program - MARC Rail Service (Maryland Regional Rail Transformation Act)

Bill Sponsor: Senator Beidle

Committee: Appropriations

Organization Submitting: Maryland Legislative Coalition

Person Submitting: Cecilia Plante, co-chair

Position: FAVORABLE

I am submitting this testimony in favor of SB0514 on behalf of the Maryland Legislative Coalition. The Maryland Legislative Coalition is an association of activists - individuals and grassroots groups in every district in the state. We are unpaid citizen lobbyists and our Coalition supports well over 30,000 members.

Our members support public transportation. It is a much more environmentally friendly mode of transportation than driving, and it supports our low- and moderate- income residents who can't afford to drive a car to work or school. Maryland has spent decades investing in roads, instead of making much better choices to support public transit. Our transit system shows this lack of investment. If we made the investment in our public transit system, instead of building and expanding roads, we would support more Marylanders in their efforts to get to jobs and services, and create jobs in the process.

This bill would require the Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) to create investment programs to fund major upgrades and expansions to the MARC commuter rail system, including additional capacity on the Brunswick, Penn and Camden lines; station improvements; and rail connections to Virginia and Delaware.

Today, MARC connects Baltimore and D.C. to many of Maryland's suburban communities, but service is too slow, infrequent, and disconnected. Service is unavailable altogether during much of the day. Investing in Maryland's passenger rail service and infrastructure would create jobs and new markets, unlock opportunities for residents, increase access to affordable housing and create a more sustainable transportation system.

This bill would also help the state compete for \$66 billion in federal funds for passenger rail, made available through the historic bipartisan Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act. Right now, Maryland is not in a position to compete for that federal money. We've needed to do this for a long time. Investments in roads are not fiscally sound. Investments in public transit are. Let's do this!

We support this bill and recommend a **FAVORABLE** report in committee.