



SB465 – Transportation – Commission to Study Establishing a Baltimore Regional Transit Authority

Testimony before Budget and Taxation Committee

March 1, 2023

Position: Favorable

Mr. Chair, Mr. Vice Chair, Sen. Washington and members of the committee, my name is Barbara Matheson, and I represent the 750+ members of Indivisible Howard County. Indivisible Howard County is an active member of the Maryland Legislative Coalition (with 30,000+ members). We are providing written testimony in **support of SB465** establishing a commission to conduct a comprehensive study and submit a report to the governor of findings and recommendations by October 31, 2024.

The city of Baltimore has many assets – a beautiful harbor with access to the remarkable Chesapeake Bay, internationally leading universities and medical centers, an extraordinary sports complex, and a major airport. **It lacks a robust, reliable transportation system.**

The costs have been significant. Baltimore has been at a disadvantage when competing for new businesses - commercial and industrial development is stifled.

Citizens of Baltimore, 30% of whom do not own cars, do not have dependable service to work, medical facilities, and social activities. Job opportunities are stifled. Safety is compromised. The public transportation system disadvantages many people already challenged by poverty and structural racism. The system needs to be more equitable. Furthermore, transportation is the largest contributor of greenhouse gas emissions in Maryland, 28%. There is an unmistakable connection between greenhouse gas emissions and the quality of public transportation.

The creation of a Transit Governance and Funding Commission is the logical solution to the many serious problems of an inadequate and dated public transit system.

We respectfully urge a favorable report.

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