



Committee: Budget and Taxation

Testimony on: SB151 – Equitable and Inclusive Transit–Oriented Development Enhancement Act

Organization: Climate Justice Wing of the Maryland Legislative Coalition

Submitting: Laurie McGilvray, Co-Chair

Position: Favorable

Hearing Date: January 25, 2023

Dear Mr. Chairman and Committee Members:

Thank you for allowing our testimony today in support of SB151. The Maryland Legislative Coalition (MLC) Climate Justice Wing, a statewide coalition of over 50 grassroots and professional organizations, urges you to vote favorably on SB151.

SB151 establishes a Transit–Oriented Development Capital Grant and Revolving Loan Fund (Fund) to provide financial assistance to local jurisdictions to be used for: 1) design plans for a transit–oriented development, provided the development meets equity goals; 2) public infrastructure improvements within a transit–oriented development; or 3) gap funding for public or private development within a transit–oriented development.

Transit-oriented development is a key policy in reducing the State’s greenhouse gases because it reduces the need for people to drive to get to work and other activities. As a coalition that cares about both climate and equity, we strongly support the intent of this bill which addresses the equity aspects of transit-oriented development. The bill accomplishes this goal in three ways. First, it directs the Secretary of the Department of Transportation (DOT) to collect and report data on the State’s efforts to increase transit-oriented development, and in particular: 1) the demographic and socioeconomic indicators present in the transit–oriented development and the surrounding areas; 2) development activity occurring in the transit–oriented development during the report period; and 3) transit station utilization rates for the transit–oriented development. Second, it directs the DOT to consider these results in updating scoring standards for applications for financial assistance from the Fund. Third, it allows DOT to establish different funding and eligibility scoring standards, including preferences for projects that will: 1) enhance access to transit for low–income and minority residents of the jurisdiction; 2) enhance access to transit in areas with affordable housing and a diversity of job and educational opportunities; or 3) encourage development around underdeveloped and underutilized transit stations in transit–oriented developments.

For these reasons, we support SB151 and recommend a **FAVORABLE** report in Committee.