



MARYLAND LEGISLATIVE LATINO CAUCUS

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TO: Delegate Kumar P. Barve, Chair
Delegate Dana Stein, Vice Chair
Environment and Transportation Committee Members
FROM: Maryland Legislative Latino Caucus
DATE: February 2nd, 2023
RE: HB0009 Equity in Transportation Sector - Guidelines and Analyses

The MLLC supports HB0009 - Equity in Transportation Sector - Guidelines and Analyses, 2023

The MLLC is a bipartisan group of Senators and Delegates committed to supporting legislation that improves the lives of Latinos throughout our state. The MLLC is a crucial voice in the development of public policy that uplifts the Latino community and benefits the state of Maryland. Thank you for allowing us the opportunity to express our support of HB0009.

Maryland's history of inequitable transportation policies (e.g. the cancellation of the Red Line light rail transit system in the Baltimore area¹ and the I-495/I-270 widening plan that would create toll lanes for those who could pay to bypass traffic²) desperately needs addressing. Ongoing systematic reviews have shown that transportation is an important social determinant of health, as transportation barriers disproportionately affect the most vulnerable groups of society who carry the highest burden of chronic diseases by blocking them from arriving to outpatient clinic appointments and obtaining medications.³ Low-income inner-city residents who often belong to racial/ethnic minority communities, are less likely to obtain medical care due to transportation barriers, controlling for socioeconomic status.⁴ In Maryland, transportation challenges to vulnerable individuals and their families include lack of access to a vehicle, the rising cost of gas, reliability of public transport, the additional time using public transportation takes – sometimes adding more than an hour to commute times – and cost (which for some can mean choosing between going to work or paying for groceries).⁵ For example, low-income people of color make up the majority of transit users in Baltimore, being more likely to live in neighborhoods adjacent to high-traffic roadways or heavily trafficked industrial areas, meaning

¹ Campbell, C. (2020, September 11). *Five Years Later, Many Across Baltimore Bitterly Lament Gov. Hogan's Decision to Kill the Red Line Light Rail*. Baltimore Sun. Retrieved January 19, 2023, from <https://www.baltimoresun.com/politics/bs-md-pol-red-line-five-years-20200911-b2d3knvbpngdrirbc44fd55pti-story.html>.

² DePuyt, B. (2022, November 17). *Decision on I-495/I-270 Toll Lanes Contract Delayed; Project's Fate Now Rests with Moore, New BPW*. Maryland Matters. Retrieved January 19, 2023, from <https://www.marylandmatters.org/2022/11/17/decision-on-i-495-i-270-toll-lanes-contract-delayed-projects-fate-now-rests-with-moore-new-bpw/>.

³ Starbird, L. E., DiMaina, C., Sun, C.-A., & Han, H.-R. (2019). A Systematic Review of Interventions to Minimize Transportation Barriers Among People with Chronic Diseases. *Journal of Community Health, 44*(2), 400–411. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10900-018-0572-3>.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Baker, F. (2022, May 9). *Transportation is a Critical Need for Maryland Workers in Underserved Communities*. United Way of Central Maryland. Retrieved January 19, 2023, from <https://uwcm.org/blog/stories/transportation-critical-need-maryland-workers-underserved-communities>.

they face the highest level of transit-related inequity, not just in terms of commute times but also when it comes to air pollution and health risks associated with vehicle emissions.⁶

To address the issues surrounding transportation equity in the state of Maryland, this bill would require that equity, with a focus on predicting and avoiding rather than fixing problems be considered when State transportation plans, reports, and goals are developed. It will require the Maryland Department of Transportation to conduct transit equity analyses according to intermediate benchmarks and measurable long-term goals; cost-benefit analyses of economic development, employment, education, health, and environmental justice; and consult with certain communities (e.g. racial minority communities, low-income communities, disabled riders, riders with limited English proficiency, transit-reliant riders, and senior riders) before announcing or proposing any major service change or any reduction or cancellation of a certain capital expansion project in the construction program.

For these reasons, the Maryland Legislative Latino Caucus respectfully requests a favorable report on HB0009.

⁶ Underferth, D. (2021, October 7). *New Report Finds Stark Transit Inequity in Baltimore City*. Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health. Retrieved January 19, 2023, from <https://publichealth.jhu.edu/2021/new-report-finds-stark-transit-inequity-in-baltimore-city>.