



TESTIMONY PRESENTED TO THE HOUSE ENVIRONMENT AND TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

HOUSE BILL 9 – EQUITY IN TRANSPORTATION SECTOR - GUIDELINES AND ANALYSES

Sponsor – Delegates Ruth, et al.

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GREATER BALTIMORE COMMITTEE

Position: Support

House Bill 9 would require the Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) in collaboration with the Maryland Transit Administration (MTA), to conduct a transit equity analysis, perform a cost-benefit analysis, consult with members and leaders of affected communities, and take actions based on the results of these activities before announcing major service changes under certain federal guidelines or any reduction or cancellation of a capital expansion program in the Consolidated Transportation Program (CTP) that would exceed certain transit equity thresholds.

The Greater Baltimore Committee's (GBC) focus on advancing racial equity and social justice includes a commitment to review all legislative proposals through an equity lens and to consider the impacts of proposed legislation on small and minority owned businesses, minority populations, and economically disadvantaged residents. Through this work, it has become apparent that the lack of equitable transportation options has had negative impacts on the State's competitive business environment. At a time when businesses are struggling to find employees, there are entire neighborhoods whose residents are cut off from reasonable transportation options.

This bill would help mitigate these disparities by requiring the MTA to develop transit equity analyses, policies, and guidelines. These requirements will empower MDOT and MTA to collect the necessary data to identify when major service changes would create disparate or undue burdens on vulnerable communities. It would require the development of equitable alternatives when possible, ensuring that disproportionate burdens are not needlessly put on the backs of these vulnerable communities. It would also require a community outreach report for reductions or cancellations of Capital Expansion Projects, allowing for transparency and collaboration with the impacted communities.

The GBC's 2023 Legislative Priorities and the recommendations of the Baltimore Transit Future campaign specifically call for the following:

- **Encourage policymakers to make capital and operating budget decisions in a data driven manner and through an equity lens.**
- **Supporting policies, funding, and incentives to enhance and promote inclusive transit-oriented development.**

This bill is also consistent with a key tenet in *Gaining the Competitive Edge: Keys to Economic Growth and Job Creation in Maryland*, a report published by the GBC that identifies eight core pillars for a competitive business environment and job growth.

GREATER BALTIMORE COMMITTEE

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Superior transportation infrastructure with reliable funding mechanisms. An essential prerequisite of a competitive business environment includes well-funded and maintained highway, transit, port and airport infrastructure that provides reliable and efficient options to move people, goods and services.

In today's increasingly competitive global economy, the region's underperforming transportation system is becoming a liability for the region's inclusive growth. Lack of reliable transportation infrastructure for divested communities has been one of the most critical obstacles in unlocking the full potential of the region's workforce. House Bill 9 is an important step in reversing that trend.

For these reasons, the Greater Baltimore Committee urges a favorable report on House Bill 9.

The Greater Baltimore Committee (GBC) is a non-partisan, independent, regional business advocacy organization comprised of hundreds of businesses -- large, medium and small -- educational institutions, nonprofit organizations and foundations located in Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Carroll, Harford, and Howard counties as well as Baltimore City. The GBC is a 68-year-old, private-sector membership organization with a rich legacy of working with government to find solutions to problems that negatively affect our competitiveness and viability.