



Committee: House Environment and Transportation Committee
Testimony on: HB-106 – State Finance – Prohibited Appropriations – Magnetic Levitation Transportation System
Organization: Maryland Legislative Coalition Climate Justice Wing
Submitting: Rhonda Kranz
Position: Favorable
Hearing Date: February 23, 2022

Dear Chair and Committee Members:

Thank you for accepting our written testimony in support of HB106. Maryland Legislative Coalitions Climate Justice Wing is a statewide coalition of grassroots and environmental advocacy organizations focused on climate justice. The bill will bring much-needed protection of public funds by prohibiting the State and certain units and instrumentalities of the State from using any appropriation for a magnetic levitation transportation system in the State; and providing that the prohibition does not apply to certain expenditures for salaries.

Maryland has experienced significant cost overruns in large transportation projects. The Purple Line has encountered major financial problems with a cost overrun of \$1.4 billion. Excessive cost overruns in development of the Inter County Connector cost millions of federal tax payers' dollars. It is essential that Maryland does not take responsibility for delays and contractual problems if the proposed SCMaglev project is accepted. In fact, as the SCMaglev is a Private, rather than a Private-Public partnership, MD taxpayers should not be responsible for funding any part of the project.

Taxpayers have already covered the over five million Federal dollars cost for the SCMaglev environmental assessment process (i.e., DEIS, EIS) and other aspects of the proposed project. Maglev would be built with three stops, DC, BWI, and Baltimore, with no stops along the corridor within the communities it would run through. Prince Georges and Baltimore Counties would incur major financial and environmental costs of building the train, and most of the burden will be on overburdened and environmental justice communities.

Maryland's transportation investments should be focused on providing affordable and accessible transportation for all members of our communities. The SCMaglev's limited and excessively expensive ridership cost would benefit only an exceedingly small fraction of the state's population.

Maryland is making great strides on adopting climate friendly policies, many targeted to be met by 2030. Analysis of the completion of the project finds that the SCMaglev would generate more greenhouse gases during construction than it is likely to save over several decades in operation. With a timeline of eight to ten years before ridership even begins, the SCMaglev would be significantly increasing, not decreasing Maryland's emissions, setting us back from achieving our reduction goals.

Why prohibit appropriations for all Maglev systems? There are multiple concerns regarding the proposed SCMaglev: loss of important ecological habitats; environmental justice, public health impacts, safety of the technology, and whether it would in fact lead to a decrease in greenhouse gas emissions, to name a few. Most of these concerns, particularly safety of the technology and health impacts are inherent in the Maglev technology rather than specific to the proposed SCMaglev project.

Maglev systems require their own operating systems that would run underground and/or on elevated tracks that can be up to 150 feet in the air. It is not compatible with the State's existing transportation systems. Maglev systems take massive amounts of land to build and operate. The proposed Maglev project includes a rail maintenance yard larger than Disneyland that would be located on federal property.

Maryland residents should not have to bear the financial costs of a Maglev project which is not fully funded by the private developer, especially if the project runs into difficulties and escalating costs as we have seen in the projects mentioned above.

We the undersigned organization urge a favorable vote for HB106.

Assateague Coastal Trust
Bethesda Green
Maryland Legislative Coalition
MD Campaign for Environmental Human Rights
Chesapeake Climate Action Network
WISE
Frack Free Frostburg
Mountain Maryland Movement
Howard County Indivisible
Howard County Sierra Club
Columbia Association Climate Change and Sustainability Advisory Committee
HoCo Climate Action
CHEER
Climate XChange - Maryland
Mid-Atlantic Field Representative/National Parks Conservation Association
350 Montgomery County
Glen Echo Heights Mobilization
The Climate Mobilization Montgomery County
Montgomery County Faith Alliance for Climate Solutions
Montgomery Countryside Alliance
Takoma Park Mobilization Environment Committee
Audubon Naturalist Society
Cedar Lane Unitarian Universalist Church Environmental Justice Ministry
Coalition For Smarter Growth
DoTheMostGood Montgomery County
MCPS Clean Energy Campaign
MoCo DCC
Potomac Conservancy
Casa de Maryland