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DEPUTY MAJORITY WHIP

Judiciary Committee

Chair, Public Safety Subcommittee

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THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

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The Honorable Delegate Kumar P. Barve

Chairman of the House Environment and Transportation

Committee 6 Bladen Street, Room 251

Annapolis, Maryland 21401

House Bill
0106

Good afternoon Chair Barve, Vice Chair Stein, and members of the House Environment and Transportation Committee. I am Delegate Nicole Williams of District 22, and I will be testifying today in favor of House Bill 0106, also known as State Finance - Prohibited Appropriations - Magnetic Levitation Transportation System. For those who were here last year, you know that this bill aims to ensure that state funds and taxpayer money do not go towards the construction of a MAGLEV train.

Those who oppose House Bill 106 echo the same sentiment, that passing this bill would send the message that state lawmakers are shortsighted and opposed to innovation. Perhaps that would be true if this bill aimed to prevent the construction of a MAGLEV train entirely, but it does not. Instead, it will ensure Marylanders do not bear the financial cost of a project that would make them the guinea pigs in the very first project of its kind in the United States.

Over the past three years, the COVID-19 pandemic has had a considerable impact on how we allocate funds in our state budget. At a time where there are a multitude of crises that warrant state intervention, it would be inappropriate to allocate funds towards a project that is opposed by residents of multiple districts. If moving this bill forward should send any message, it is that state lawmakers will prioritize the immediate pressing needs of Maryland and its residents over a project that is forecast to cause direct and immediate economic and

environmental harm to many Maryland communities

The only stop between DC and Baltimore will be BWI, meaning communities in between the two cities will receive little benefit once the train is actually running. Yet it is these communities that will bear most of the indirect costs of construction and operation. The 2021 Draft Environmental Impact Statement projected that the negative impacts on local business revenues would range between \$18.5 and \$311.3 million due to lane closures, traffic delays, and limited accessibility.

Moreover, the project study area mostly consists of communities of color, which would experience increased light, noise, and air pollution along with decreased property values, according to the DEIS. Emergency exits and ventilation stations would also need to be included along the line, which would require drilling as deep as 150 feet.

The MAGLEV currently is set to run straight through the Patuxent Research Refuge, which is the only national wildlife refuge dedicated to research, is the nation's largest center for environmental science and education run by the US Department of the Interior, and is of critical ecological importance to Maryland. With its location amid one of the most densely populated and developed regions in the state, it is an ecological haven not just for plants and wildlife, but also for local residents of Prince George's County. According to the Draft Environmental Impact Statement, damage to the Patuxent Research Refuge would be extensive and difficult to mitigate.

These extreme and disproportionate environmental and financial burdens should not be imposed with the aid of Maryland taxpayer dollars, especially when those affected will not be the primary beneficiaries.

The parties that would be responsible for the financing and construction of the MAGLEV train have stated previously that there would be no need to rely on state funding, however they have yet to secure even half of what it is projected to cost. By passing this legislation, we can hold them to their promise. State funds could then be secured for other priorities, such as bolstering our education system, helping working families that are still reeling from the effects of the pandemic, and improving Maryland's existing transportation systems.

The goal of this legislation is to guarantee that hardworking Marylanders do not end up footing the bill for a project that has such vocal opposition from members of our communities and is not ready for primetime to really address a significant reduction in greenhouse gas emissions up and down the I-95 corridor.

For these reasons, I urge the committee to give a favorable report on House Bill 0106.

Sincerely,

Nicole A. Williams, Esq.

Delegate Nicole A. Williams, Esq.