

February 17, 2023

The Honorable Kumar P. Barve
Chair, House Environment and
Transportation Committee
MD General Assembly
Room 251 House Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

HB106

The Honorable Ben Barnes
Chair, House Appropriations Committee
MD General Assembly
Room 121 House Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

**RE: TESTIMONY IN OPPOSITION TO HB106—STATE FINANCE – PROHIBITED
APPROPRIATIONS – MAGNETIC LEVITATION TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM**

Dear Chair Barve, Chair Barnes, and Members of the House Environment & Transportation and Appropriations Committees,

My name is Wayne Rogers, and I am the Chairman/CEO of Baltimore-Washington Rapid Rail (BWRR). I appear before you today to convey our **strong opposition to HB106**.

BWRR is a railroad franchised by the Maryland Public Service Commission (PSC) to operate a 311mph Superconducting Magnetic Levitation (SCMAGLEV) train between Washington, D.C. and Baltimore. Once constructed, the train will take passengers between Baltimore and Washington in just 15 minutes, accounting for a stop at BWI Airport. Not only will the project result in “substantial economic and social benefits to Baltimore and the State of Maryland,” as deemed by the Maryland PSC, but most notably, the project is not requesting any State appropriations.

HB106 aims to prohibit any appropriations from being used by the State or certain units or instrumentalities of the State for a Magnetic Levitation system in the State. Passing a bill prohibiting appropriations that have not been requested is not only bad public policy, but also sends a clear message to Maryland citizens: that the region’s current rail transit system continues to be deeply misunderstood and dismissed.

One of the main arguments behind this bill is that the Maryland taxpayer should never be “on the hook” for a project such as ours, further implying that State funds are better used elsewhere to improve and upgrade existing rail. Not only is this flawed logic due to current rail infrastructure having already nearly met physical limits, but the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) conducted by the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) confirms that the BWRR SCMAGLEV would, in fact, alleviate pressure on current rail infrastructure and Maryland taxpayers. It states, “To the degree that trains in the corridor are expected to be at capacity between 2030 and 2045, these diversions [to SCMAGLEV] free up capacity for additional travelers without making public investment to add capacity.”

In other words, by alleviating stress on over-capacity systems, such as MARC and Amtrak, taxpayers will see savings through added transit capacity and reduced traffic -- without state appropriations. These savings can be reinvested in improving first- and last-mile transportation systems throughout the state, providing lawmakers the opportunity to invest in the robust transit future so many Marylanders wish to see. The idea that State funds would be viewed as “wasted”



if used on innovative, safe, and reliable modes of transit is not only disappointing, but **untrue and short-sighted**, as investing in complementary rail systems has been thoroughly researched and found to improve the state's overall transportation grid.

While the SCMAGLEV is not requesting State funding, passing a bill that prevents the State of Maryland to further pursue remedies to resolve issues that plague Maryland citizens each and every day is simply a statement that we cannot support. Furthermore, BWRR is committed to ensure any issues identified within the DEIS, or raised during the public comment period, are addressed in the best way possible for communities and the environment.

HB106 would signal to Maryland citizens and to the world that the state is closed to innovative, future-oriented, and true solutions to worsening issues.

For these reasons, Baltimore-Washington Rapid Rail **strongly opposes HB106** and urges the committee to submit an **unfavorable report**. Thank you for the opportunity to appear.

Sincerely,

Wayne L. Rogers
Chairman/CEO