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**Committee: Environment and Transportation**

**Testimony on: HB819 – “Montgomery County - Off Street Parking Requirements Near Mass Transit Stations MC/PG 106-23”**

**Position: Support**

**Hearing Date: March 9, 2023**

The Maryland Chapter of the Sierra Club supports HB819 that would prohibit the Montgomery County District Council from adopting or enforcing a local law that requires the creation of new off-street parking for a residential development that is located within a 0.25-mile radius of a present or planned Metro or Purple Line Station.

Such a policy is consistent with the planning for the Purple Line which intentionally did not provide parking adjacent to stations to encourage greater use of transit and walking to the stations. The bill would help maintain that policy and extend it to Metro stations in Montgomery County. The prohibition on requiring new off-street parking for developments would:

- promote compact, walkable and bikeable neighborhoods near transit stations;
- actively combat car dependency;
- lessen climate-damaging greenhouse gas and other health-damaging emissions from private vehicles that would travel to and from new off-street parking, and
- reduce vehicle miles traveled.

Other benefits from not requiring new off-street parking for developments near transit stations include:

- improving safety for pedestrians and bicyclists living nearby or going to and from stations;
- ensuring more land is available for development of compact, walkable housing and job creation near transit;
- reducing the cost of development which would make it easier to build more affordable housing near transit; and
- reducing air pollution impact on people who live near or access the stations.

In summary, passage of HB819 makes sense for the environment, the health and safety of current and future residents, and promoting economic development near transit stations. We urge a favorable report on this bill.

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Founded in 1892, the Sierra Club is America’s oldest and largest grassroots environmental organization. The Maryland Chapter has over 70,000 members and supporters, and the Sierra Club nationwide has over 800,000 members and nearly four million supporters.