



TESTIMONY TO THE HOUSE FINANCE COMMITTEE

SB 412 Transportation - Maryland Rail Authority - Establishment (Maryland Rail Investment Act of 2023)

POSITION: Support

BY: Nancy Soreng, LWVMD President

Date: February 22, 2023

The League of Women Voters of Maryland believes in achieving and maintaining cooperative working relationships among state and local agencies in order to achieve better planning and to decrease the use of single occupancy vehicles. Therefore, we agree with SB 412 that there should be a rail component as part of Maryland's Transportation Authority. When governmental agencies work together and form alliances and relationships it fosters efficiency and better decision making.

Two components of this bill stand out, powers and duties. It is important that rail be integrated into Maryland's system of transportation and assumes both being accountable for the benefits of rail as well as the responsibilities.

Maryland has a Port Administration, an Aviation Administration, isn't it time for a Rail Authority too that is integrated into our Transportation Authority? Many of the responsibilities of each component of transportation are tied to money, both how it is raised and how it is spent.

LWVMD is a strong supporter of a clean environment. Research shows that rail is both efficient at moving goods and people as well as a form of transportation that is more environmentally friendly. By including rail in Maryland's already formed systems that oversee transportation, it provides a way our state can be accountable for pollutants as well as being fiscally prudent.

Guidelines that are transparent and readily available like a Rail Authority within an established organization help everyone in Maryland. LWVMD supports and urges your affirmative vote for bill SB 412.