

Good afternoon. I am JoAnne Lyons Wooten, a Baltimore City resident, representing the Maryland Poor People's Campaign. Our group has one goal: ending poverty in our State. We enthusiastically encourage swift passage of SB19.

Transportation policies have historically entrenched disparities that have impacted people of color and low-wealth communities for generations and have been a major barrier to lifting-up poor Marylanders. Professor Deborah Archer of the NYU School of Law writes, "Our transportation system has always been a driver of racial inequality. The benefits and burdens of our transportation system have been planned, developed, and sustained to pull resources from Black communities."<sup>1</sup>

In Maryland, two well-known disastrous transportation projects are the infamous Highway-to-Nowhere constructed in 1964 and the cancelation of the Red Line light rail system ordered by then-Governor Hogan in 2015. Full construction of the Highway-to-Nowhere was canceled but not before it devastated 8 vibrant, majority-Black neighborhoods in West Baltimore; displacing 1,500 residents, destroying 971 homes and demolishing 62 businesses. Mayor Scott calls the highway, "the poster child for inequality and systemic racism in our country. The racial and economic disparities that persist in Baltimore are clear."<sup>2</sup>

A NAACP Legal Defense Fund study found the cancelation of the Red Line had a disproportionately negative impact on Blacks and other racial minorities while benefiting white residents.<sup>3</sup>

The equity assessments required by SB19 would have prevented the enduring damage caused by the construction of the Highway-to-Nowhere and the cancelation of the Red Line.

SB19 is an important step toward redressing historical inequities and implementing transformative policies.

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<sup>1</sup> Archer, Deborah N, "Transportation Policy and the Underdevelopment of Black Communities," 106 Iowa Law Review 2125 (2021)

<sup>2</sup> Scott, Mayor Brandon, "Righting an old wrong: Baltimore's Highway to Nowhere," as reported by Jeff Hager, WMAR 2 ABC Baltimore,

<sup>3</sup> ECONorthwest, "Baltimore Red Line Cancellation: The Implications for Black Households," Prepared for NAACP Legal Defense Fund, December 2015