



Committee: Finance
Testimony on: SB019 - Equity in Transportation Sector - Guidelines & Analyses
Organization: Maryland Legislative Coalition Climate Justice Wing
Submitting: Laurie McGilvray, Co-Chair
Position: Favorable
Hearing Date: February 1, 2023

Dear Chair and Committee Members:

Thank you for allowing our testimony today. The Maryland Legislative Coalition Climate Justice Wing, a statewide coalition of over 50 grassroots and professional organizations, urges you to vote favorably on SB019. This bill rectifies decades of inequality in transportation access for black and brown communities by affirmatively requiring the State to make equity a primary goal in Maryland Transit Administration's (MTA's) Transportation Plan.

SB019 is necessary because although Title VI of the 1964 Civil Rights Act was intended to guarantee equal access to public transportation, Maryland has not enforced it at the state level. There are numerous examples of race-based transit inequity - from cancellation of the Red Line in Baltimore to MTA service cuts in September 2020, which caused the greatest burden on routes servicing black communities. In 2020, there were no cuts in the airport or state highway administration and only minor temporary cuts proposed for the MARC commuter rail service with its 65-70% white ridership.

SB019 aims to fix these inequities by requiring a proactive and anticipatory approach to equity in transit and intermodal transit planning and by broadening participation by transit dependent communities in that planning. It requires MTA to develop transit equity analysis policies and guidelines, including thresholds for when a reduction or cancellation of a capital expansion project requires such analysis. For a major service change, if a transit equity analysis reveals disparate impact or disproportionate burden, MTA must develop alternatives and conduct a transit equity analysis of those alternatives. If a disparate impact can be avoided, MTA must proceed with that alternative. If there is no alternative, MTA may not implement the proposed service change unless a substantial justification exists and it must implement the alternative that causes the least impact or burden.

It is time for Maryland to take this vital step forward in the fight against discriminatory transit policies. We support SB019 and recommend a **FAVORABLE** report in committee.