

Members of the Finance Committee:

I am a resident of District 33A and a member of Showing Up for Racial Justice Annapolis and Anne Arundel County.

I am requesting that you support **SB0019 Equity in Transportation Sector - Guidelines and Analyses**, which has the goal of making transportation in our state more equitable.

This bill establishes a state-wide transportation equity analysis development, maintenance, review, and enforcement framework to ensure access to transportation is statutorily guaranteed for individuals regardless of race, ethnicity, national origin, English proficiency, ability status, and gender orientation.

Racial inequity has a long tradition in Maryland transportation planning. The initial plan was for the light rail in Anne Arundel County to extend to Annapolis. But that was dismissed in 1992. The NIMBY principle prevailed. So our state capital remains inaccessible to many residents who don't have their own personal form of transportation despite Annapolis being located between two important population centers.

Racial animus has continued into the present time, attempting to further disadvantage both people of color and poor people. There has been an asserted effort to close some of the rail stations in the northern part of Anne Arundel County. Electioneering in 2018 had such obvious dog-whistles that even the foreign press heard them (['Addicts, crooks, and thieves': The campaign to kill Baltimore's light rail. The Guardian 8/22/2018](#)).

The racial inequity continued during the first two years of the pandemic. In response to record low ridership during the early months, the Maryland Transit Administration (MTA) aimed to eliminate 25 Baltimore bus lines that would affect mostly Black neighborhoods. Even though the MTA backed off of its plans, they should never have been able to make those budget cut decisions without an analysis for how much it would disproportionately impact Black workers in Baltimore and across the state of Maryland trying to get to their jobs. As Mayor Brandon Scott has said: "Historically, transit and equity has always been linked back to racial injustice, in Baltimore and beyond."

Black residents in Baltimore City rely heavily on public transportation. The cancellation of the Red Line in 2015 dashed the hopes of citizens who would have relied on the Red Line to access better jobs and to arrive on time at those jobs. Our previous Governor scuttled the Red Line and instead funds went to sparsely populated white areas of

Western Maryland and the Purple Line that primarily will benefit white suburbanites of DC. Now that we have a Governor willing to use a racial equity lens, we can finally get this done. Please do your part to make it happen.

If this bill does not become law, the pattern of racial inequity will continue. This is not who we want to be as Marylanders. This is your chance to show up for racial equity. For these reasons, I am strongly encouraging you to vote **in SUPPORT of SB0019**.

Thank you for your time, service, and consideration.

Sincerely,

Linda K. Girdner
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