



Committee: Finance Committee
Testimony on: SB412-Maryland Rail Investment Act
Organization: Climate Justice Wing of the Maryland Legislative Coalition
Submitting: Laurie McGilvray, Co-Chair
Position: Favorable
Hearing Date: February 22, 2023

Dear Mr. Chairman and Committee Members:

Thank you for allowing our testimony today in support of SB412. The Maryland Legislative Coalition Climate Justice Wing, a statewide coalition of over 50 grassroots and professional organizations, urges you to vote favorably on SB412.

Transportation is the largest source of Maryland's greenhouse gas emissions and vehicles are the single largest contributor. To reduce these emissions, Maryland must turn away from its heavy investment in highways and pivot to cleaner forms of transportation, including rail.

SB412 aims to do this by creating a Maryland Rail Authority (Rail Authority) to fund and implement rail and transit projects through revenue generated by Maryland's existing toll facilities that are in excess of road maintenance needs. The new Rail Authority would be able to issue bonds for these investments.

The Rail Authority, acting on behalf of the Department of Transportation, would have the power to oversee financing, construction, and operation of new rail and transit projects. The first projects would be to:

- Extend MARC commuter rail service to Newark, Delaware, Northern Virginia, and Western Maryland;
- Replace the Baltimore & Potomac Tunnel with the new Douglass Tunnel;
- Construct the Southern Maryland Rapid Transit System; and
- Improve the existing Brunswick, Camden, and Penn commuter rail lines.

SB412 complements the Maryland Regional Rail Transformation Act that the General Assembly passed in 2022 that capitalizes on federal resources for the MARC Cornerstone Plan and regional rail service. Maryland can look across the river to Virginia to see how it has taken advantage of federal dollars for rail improvements, including purchasing hundreds of miles of right-of-way for passenger rail. Maryland deserves similar investment and benefits.

We urge the Committee to recommend a **FAVORABLE** report for SB412.