



**Testimony Presented to the Senate Finance Committee
SB0875 - Transportation – Task Force to Study the Reconstitution of the Maryland
Transportation Commission**

Sponsor: Senator Washington

Position: Favorable

This testimony is submitted by the members of the Baltimore Metropolitan Council’s Transit Governance and Funding Workgroup (TGFW). The TGFW was appointed by the Baltimore Metropolitan Council’s Board of Directors to identify meaningful recommendations to develop a more effective and inclusive regional transit system in the Baltimore region.

The TGFW met from August through December, 2022. We are pleased to support SB0875 which directly reflects the fourth recommendation from our report published in January 2023.

The Maryland Transportation Commission was formed in 1971. The Commission has seventeen members, including ten Gubernatorial appointees and the seven regional members of the State Roads Commission. The Governor names the Chair (Code Transportation Article, secs. 2-201 through 2-205).

Among the stated purposes of the Commission are the responsibilities to “study the entire transportation system of this State and regularly discuss with the Secretary any matter relating to this State’s transportation system” and to “advise and make recommendations to the Secretary and heads of the units in the Department on all matters that concern transportation policy and program execution” (MD. Transportation Code Ann. 2-205).

The current description of the Commission on MDOT’s website states, “the Maryland Transportation Commission shall consider any request for the dedication of transportation facilities in memory or honor of individuals or groups of significance to the state of Maryland.” A cursory review of their meeting minutes, last posted in December 2020, shows this largely ceremonial role to be the current function of the Commission. As currently constituted, the Maryland Transportation Commission is not fulfilling its legislatively defined role.

Maryland’s unified Transportation Trust Fund (TTF) is one of the true strengths of our transportation program. Our statewide and blended approach to planning and building transportation assets provides tremendous advantages when securing federal and private dollars for capital transportation projects. However, a drawback of our current statewide approach is the



overconcentration of power and decision making in MDOT and the perceived lack of transparency in many of its decisions.

A reconstituted Maryland Transportation Commission, with a focus on reviewing and commenting on the Consolidated Transportation Plan (CTP), would provide much needed transparency for MDOT as well as ensure that all corners of the state and their leadership receive a voice in project development. An additional benefit would be the opportunity to revise the antiquated CTP and develop a more efficient and impactful process for obtaining statewide input into the CTP.

The intent behind the Maryland Transportation Commission is clear in the Maryland Code. Clarification of its specific duties and role would empower them to provide truly valuable service to our State. **SB0875** is a vehicle to develop much needed improvements to our statewide transportation program.

We strongly encourage **FAVORABLE** reports for **SB0875**. Thank you for your consideration.

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