



TESTIMONY FOR HB0009 Equity in Transportation Sector - Guidelines and Analyses

Bill Sponsor: Delegate Ruth

Committee: Environment and Transportation

Organization Submitting: Maryland Legislative Coalition

Person Submitting: Cecilia Plante, co-chair

Position: FAVORABLE

I am submitting this testimony in favor of HB0009 on behalf of the Maryland Legislative Coalition. The Maryland Legislative Coalition is an association of activists - individuals and grassroots groups in every district in the state. We are unpaid citizen lobbyists and our Coalition supports well over 30,000 members.

Why was the Red Line canceled? Was an analysis done to see what effect it would have on the affected communities (lost jobs and wages, lost customers) vs the cost savings? Why were the cuts to bus service made in 2020 when the majority of people affected were low-income, front-line workers? What other options were evaluated?

When the Department of Transportation, and the Governor, can make unilateral decisions that completely evade Title VI protections, and actually harm low-income and front-line workers without any repercussions at all, it's time to make significant changes. It is unconscionable that we don't lead our policy endeavors with equity in mind. Even the fact that Maryland spends 80% of its transportation budget on roads, while leaving our public transit system to crumble is a flashing red light that the decision-making process needs to change.

Passing this bill will bring equity into the planning process. It will require that equity is considered when making transportation plans and will preclude the Department of Transportation from self-policing Title VI changes. It establishes the Commission on Transportation Equity to assist in developing policies and performance measures to ensure the State transportation system is equitable. Finally, it requires the Department of Transportation to conduct transit equity analyses and consult with impacted communities before announcing or proposing service changes.

We support this bill and recommend a **FAVORABLE** report in committee.