

February 20, 2024

Written Testimony in Favor of HB0170 – State Finance – Prohibited Appropriations – Magnetic Levitation Transportation System (Cross-file SB0079)

To: Chair Korman, Vice Chair Boyce, and Members of the Environment and Transportation Committee,

My name is Joyce Campbell, submitting testimony as an individual. I am speaking in support of HB0170, sponsored by Delegate Nicole Williams.

About this bill: This bill would prohibit Baltimore-Washington Rapid Rail (BWRR) from appropriating funds from the state of Maryland to build the proposed SCMaglev transportation system, “providing that the prohibition does not apply to certain expenditures for salaries” of state employees. This exception directly addresses concerns expressed by Northeast Maglev that a previous version of this bill had unintended consequences in that it would inadvertently tie their hands to work with the appropriate state personnel to acquire permits or other required approvals should the project go forward.

I support this bill because I do not believe that any taxpayer money should go for a transportation system that would benefit the wealthy, would be out of reach of the middle and poorer classes, would be bad for the environment (destroying forests that surround Greenbelt where I live), and would go against principles of environmental justice since its construction would damage low-income neighborhoods.

BWRR claims that the Maglev would pay for itself with private investment but we know from past experience that despite good intentions, such massive transportation projects sooner or later demand taxpayer money to be viable. Hence the need for this bill.

This bill is even more important when one considers the financial needs of the State of Maryland now – the deficit and our already high taxes. This bill would ward off the possibility of having to include funding the Maglev in the state’s budget.

I ask that HB 170 be given a favorable vote and moved out of committee.

Sincerely,

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