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Legislative District 46
Baltimore City

Health and Government Operations
Committee
Subcommittees

Health Occupations and Long Term Care
Public Health and Minority
Health Disparities

House Chair
Joint Committee on Program Open Space
and Agricultural Land Preservation



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Testimony in Support of HB 89 - Income Tax - Credit for Individuals Without Motor Vehicles (One Less Car Act of 2024)

February 1, 2024

Thank you Chair Atterbeary, Vice Chair Wilkins, and members of the Ways and Means Committee, I am Delegate Robbyn Lewis, testifying today on behalf of HB89. This bill will provide a suitable alternative to car ownership for many Marylanders who choose to give up one vehicle and go “car light” or “car free”.

Currently, car ownership is broadly subsidized, e.g., by offering tax rebates to Electric Vehicle (EV) owners, or allowing the right-of-way to be used for car storage. No incentives exist for getting rid of a car or going car free. As a result, car ownership has become the default option. We should not be forcing people into vehicle ownership. Car payments are at an all-time high, averaging \$730. When you think about low- and middle-income households, \$730 is a substantial dent in a family’s monthly budget. The average American spends \$9,000 a year on the costs of owning a car, but the average per capita income in Maryland is \$49,865. Clearly, the costs of car ownership are deeply regressive.

HB89 offers a tax credit to individuals or households that get rid of one car.

This bill is crucial to meeting our climate goals. The transportation sector emits 30% of total Greenhouse Gas emissions. Electric vehicles are one way to address this, but it is an unattainable option for many families. Instead, we should reward Marylanders who do not own a car to help the environment and create healthier communities.

I am aware of the fiscal note for this bill, which is rather impressive. I believe that there was some confusion about the bill’s intent, which I am working with the Department of Legislative Services to address. The fiscal note appears to award a tax credit to every non-car owning Maryland resident, however, the bill’s intent was instead to provide that tax credit only to individuals who sold, or otherwise got rid of one car they owned. This would create an incentive to have “one less car”.

Thank you for your consideration. I request a favorable report.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Robbyn Lewis', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

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(o)