

**Date:** 1/27/25

**Subject:** Written Testimony in Favor of **SB0055** – State Finance – Prohibited Appropriations – Magnetic Levitation Transportation System (Cross-file **HB0400**)

**To:** Chairman Guzzone, Vice Chair Rosapepe, and Members of the Budget and Taxation Committee,

**Description of Bill:**

Senate Bill SB0055 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 is in response to Northeast Maglev’s concerns that earlier versions 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. By including this provision, the bill should be acceptable to BWRR and the Northeast Maglev.

My name is Karen Knee. I am writing in support of SB0055, sponsored by Senators A. Washington, Augustine, and Beidle.

BWRR continues to seek federal funding for their project (SCMaglev). BWRR has repeatedly stated that they do not need state funds. And yet they argue that they want state funds to be available *just in case* financial support is needed “later” in the project’s implementation. Given that federal funding is less available, the state needs to protect its dwindling funds from being directed toward this boondoggle of a project. The state needs to protect transportation dollars for projects that will actually improve transit opportunities in Maryland. The most this project will do is it will go through money and not produce anything useful. The projected costs will increase unceasingly, and the project is likely to never be completed.

My concern is that if this project were to ever “begin” it will run out of funding over and over again, will be over budget continuously, will continuously ask the state for untenable amounts of funding, and the result will be that our financial resources and precious land will be seriously compromised for an unneeded project that will never be completed. And our land – our precious natural resource – will be forever damaged – for ABSOLUTELY NO BENEFIT TO ANYONE.

Further, BWRR has not, thus far, been able to demonstrate to the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) that the construction of this project will meet MDE's requirements for protecting our waterways – also a precious natural resource.

Much is on the line in this bill. Maryland's financial resources, our natural resources of land and water, and the integrity of our communities.

I ask that SB0055 be given a favorable vote and moved out of committee.

Sincerely,

Karen L. Knee

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