

Date: January 27, 2025

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 Laurie A. Hortie and I am writing in **support of SB0055**, sponsored by Senators A. Washington, Augustine, and Beidle.

Here is my written testimony:

The state’s transportation funding is facing limitations and funding needs to be allocated toward urgent and practical projects – those that will benefit Maryland citizens – the taxpayers who pay for these projects. The transportation needs of the state and its residents are for effective, affordable, and accessible commuter options – not an overpriced, limited access, train for the wealthy. As a retired Maryland public school teacher of 32 years I have seen firsthand how the lack of accessible commuter options affect all residents, but most especially impacts our poorest students and their families. This is true across the state.

There is much on the line in this bill: Maryland’s financial resources, our natural resources of land and water, and the integrity of our communities. The State needs to prepare for the changing scenarios the Climate Crisis is creating for how we live, work and travel. A lifelong resident of Maryland, I have seen with my own eyes how Maryland’s climate has been impacted by Climate Change. We must act by carefully attending to the footprint of projects that the state funds.

Based on recent research, the construction of the SCMaglev will generate more greenhouse gases than it will save for several decades. We do not have decades to wait for such a “possibility”. In addition, the project will destroy hundreds of acres of wild green spaces including a forest preserve, wetlands and wildlife refuge all of which are needed for CO2 storage, clean air and water, and climate cooling.

Our planet needs protecting so that future generations may thrive and flourish. Maryland's future generations will thank you.

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

Sincerely,

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