

February 12, 2025

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

Chair Korman, Vice Chair Boyce, and Members of the Environment and Transportation Committee,
My name is Patty McGrath, a member of the Maryland Coalition for Responsible Transit, submitting written testimony as an individual.

I am writing in support of HB0400, sponsored by Delegates Williams, Bartlett, Chang, Fennell, Healey, Ivey, Martinez, and Rogers. 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 is responsive to and directly addresses concerns expressed by Northeast Maglev that a previous iteration 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.

My strongest objection to the BWRR project is the ecological devastation it would cause to protected wetlands, streams and rivers. The project would tear through the Patuxent River basin, which flows into the Chesapeake Bay. A most vivid picture is a 200+ acre rail yard where there is currently an intact forest ecosystem. And the Agricultural Research Station and Goddard Space Center are not merely convenient places to run a completely redundant Northeast corridor rail line. Our current climate is serving up flooding rains unprecedented in over 150 years of weather records. And more flooding rains are coming. Repair or recompense will never be made to downstream victims of this environmental disaster in the making. Connect the dots. Listen to the broad coalition of citizens who oppose this BWRR project.

I understand that BWRR has spent their already received federal funds. This is a ‘rich man’s train project’, serving NO public transportation function, and deserves absolutely no Federal or State financial support. We need to focus on efficient public transportation for the general public.

I spend time in Italy visiting family every year. The Italian train system has “rapid rail” to all major cities - without the use of MAGLEV or a completely redundant set of tracks! That’s where we need to invest.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony favorable to HB0400, which I look forward to moving out of committee.

Sincerely,

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