



Testimony Opposing Maryland House Bill 48

Presented by Aisha Bond, Esq. President/CEO, Greater Washington DC Black Chamber of Commerce

January 30, 2025

Chairperson Barve, Vice Chair Stein, and esteemed members of the House Environment and Transportation Committee:

I am Aisha Bond, President & CEO of the Greater Washington DC Black Chamber of Commerce (GWBCC). We are dedicated to promoting economic development and supporting Black-owned businesses in the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area. I appreciate the opportunity to present testimony on behalf of GWBCC in opposition to House Bill 48, titled "Railroad Companies - Condemnation Authority - Application."

House Bill 48 seeks to exclude entities operating railroads powered by magnetic levitation propulsion systems from the authority to acquire property through condemnation.

While we understand the intent to address concerns related to property rights, we believe this bill could inadvertently hinder economic growth and infrastructure development that are vital to our community.

Impact on Economic Development

The introduction of advanced transportation technologies, such as magnetic levitation systems, presents significant opportunities for economic development. These projects can create jobs, stimulate local businesses, and enhance connectivity within the region. Restricting the necessary authority to acquire property for such developments may deter investment and stall projects that could benefit the communities we represent.

Equitable Infrastructure Advancement

Infrastructure projects have the potential to revitalize underserved areas, providing much-needed services and opportunities. By limiting the tools available to develop these projects, HB 48 could disproportionately affect Black-owned businesses and communities that would benefit from improved transportation infrastructure. It is crucial that legislation supports equitable development rather than creating barriers that may perpetuate existing disparities.



Commitment to Community Engagement

We advocate for a balanced approach that ensures property rights are respected while allowing for the advancement of critical infrastructure. This includes robust community engagement and transparent processes to address concerns and mitigate adverse impacts. We believe that with proper safeguards and inclusive dialogue, it is possible to achieve development goals that serve the public interest and protect individual rights.

In conclusion, the Greater Washington DC Black Chamber of Commerce respectfully opposes House Bill 48. We urge the committee to consider the broader implications of this legislation on economic development and equity within our communities. We recommend fostering policies that encourage innovation and infrastructure improvements, coupled with strong community engagement and protections.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Aisha Bond".

Aisha Bond, Esq.

President/CEO

Greater Washington DC Black Chamber of Commerce