



MARYLAND ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY

January 28, 2025

Bill: <https://mgaleg.maryland.gov/2025RS/bills/hb/hb0048F.pdf>

Committee: Environment and Transportation

Testimony on: HB0048—Railroad Companies—Condemnation Authority-Application

Position: Support SB0048

The Maryland Ornithological Society (MOS) strongly supports SB0048 and urges the Committee to issue a favorable report. This bill would alter the process of condemnation for railroad lines so that condemnation could not be used for any railroad powered by a magnetic levitation propulsion system (Mag-Lev).

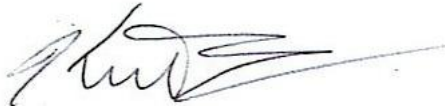
MOS opposes the proposed Mag-Lev line between Washington, D.C. and Baltimore, because it would destroy several hundreds of acres of forest on the Beltsville Agricultural Research Center or Patuxent Research Refuge, part of last large undeveloped green space between the two cities.

The proposed Mag-Lev line would do little to reduce road traffic between the cities, as the fares would be prohibitively expensive, and there would be only three stops. Funds will be better spent on improving existing rail corridors, which will benefit commuters, while preserving habitat.

We urge a favorable Committee Report from the Committee. North America has lost almost 30% of its birds since 1970.¹ Loss of habitat is one of the major causes of these declines. Mag-Lev will destroy acres of habitat, slice up the largest green space in Central Maryland, and do little to reduce traffic and associated air pollution. MOS asks the Committee to issue a favorable report on HB0055.

Sincerely,

¹ Rosenberg, Kenneth V. et al, Decline of the North American avifauna, Science, VOL 366, NO. 6451, 19 September 2019, https://www.science.org/doi/10.1126/science.aaw1313?adobe_mc=MCORGID%3D242B6472541199F70A4C98A6%2540AdobeOrg%7CTS%3D1707754028

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kurt R. Schwarz', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Kurt R. Schwarz
Conservation Chair Emeritus
Maryland Ornithological Society
www.mdbirds.org