

January 30, 2025

Delegate Marc Korman, Chair
House Environment and Transportation Committee
250 Taylor House Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: HB 48 - UNFAVORABLE - Railroad Companies - Condemnation Authority - Application

Dear Chair Korman and Members of the Committee:

I am Deborah Harrington, a resident of Prince George's County and a certified Women and Minority Business Owner, writing to express my strong **opposition** to **House Bill 48**. This bill would prohibit entities operating maglev-powered railroads from utilizing condemnation authority—an essential tool afforded to all other railroad companies in the state. This proposal would end the opportunity in Maryland to develop a maglev transportation project, a critical infrastructure initiative that promises substantial economic, labor, and environmental benefits for Maryland, particularly for historically underserved communities.

The Baltimore-Washington SCMAGLEV project presents a significant opportunity for Minority and Women-Owned Businesses in Maryland, particularly within Black communities. With a \$4 billion investment allocated specifically to these businesses, the project will directly create the jobs and construction opportunities that have been sorely needed in underserved communities. This initiative ensures that local businesses, especially those led by African Americans, will have access to the kinds of high-wage, sustainable employment opportunities that can help close longstanding economic gaps.

I had the privilege of experiencing the maglev train firsthand during a visit to Tokyo last summer, and I can attest to the transformative potential of this technology. The maglev train's efficiency, speed, and smooth, quiet operation represent the future of transportation. In Japan, maglev trains have dramatically reduced travel times and have become a key component of a sustainable and modern transportation network. These trains are not merely a technological innovation; they are an investment in the future of regional connectivity, environmental sustainability, and economic growth. Maryland must seize this opportunity to modernize its own transportation infrastructure, reduce congestion, and create thousands of jobs.

The construction of a maglev system in Maryland would generate thousands of high-wage jobs across various sectors, including construction, operations, and long-term maintenance. Local communities, particularly those in Prince George's County, would benefit significantly from this influx of employment opportunities, especially given the historical challenges faced by Black and Brown communities in accessing quality, high-paying jobs, and opportunities to become prime and subprime contractors. Moreover, this project would stimulate broader economic activity, creating demand for construction materials, manufacturing, and technological services, which would ripple through the local economy.

However, the restrictions imposed by HB 48 would severely hinder the development of this critical infrastructure. Condemnation authority ensures that large-scale rail projects, such as the maglev system, can acquire land efficiently and promptly, minimizing delays. Without this authority, the Northeast Maglev project—and potentially other future infrastructure initiatives—would face significant obstacles in developing

in Maryland, ultimately stalling prospective economic growth, reducing job opportunities, and delaying critical transportation improvements.

Furthermore, the environmental benefits of the maglev system cannot be overstated. These transit systems produce zero direct emissions, making them an ideal solution for reducing air pollution and advancing Maryland's climate goals. Given that communities of color are disproportionately impacted by pollution and environmental hazards, the development of a clean, efficient, and high-speed transportation system would significantly improve public health and contribute to environmental justice across the state.

I strongly urge this committee to vote **against House Bill 48**. The bill threatens the future of Maryland's economy, workforce, and environment by limiting the state's ability to efficiently acquire land for essential infrastructure projects. The maglev system represents a transformative opportunity for Maryland—a chance to modernize our transportation infrastructure, create high-quality jobs, and reduce our carbon footprint. It is essential that we do not let this bill set a dangerous precedent that could impede the progress of not just the maglev project, but other vital infrastructure initiatives in the future.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Deborah Harrington, Founder and CEO
Energy Audits and Green Solutions