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**Testimony on HB0517 –  
Position: Favorable**

**Transportation - Maryland Area Rail Commuter Rail Authority - Establishment (MARC Rail Authority Act of 2025)**

**TO:** Chair Korman, Vice Chair Boyce, and members of the Environment and Transportation Committee

**FROM:** Richard Keith Kaplowitz

**My name is Richard Keith Kaplowitz. I am a resident of District 3, Frederick County. I am submitting this testimony in support of HB#/0517, Transportation - Maryland Area Rail Commuter Rail Authority - Establishment (MARC Rail Authority Act of 2025)**

This bill recognizes the importance of the Maryland Area Rail Commuter system to the transportation network of the state and attempts to create a centralized authority to manage that system within the state. The MARC Rail Authority Act of 2025 would create a dedicated authority to manage and improve the MARC rail service, WHERE NONE EXISTS! The bill also authorizes the MARC Rail Authority to issue revenue bonds to finance railroad facilities. Improved MARC rail services can reduce traffic congestion, lower greenhouse gas emissions, and provide a convenient and sustainable transportation option for commuters.

The Maryland Department of Transportation Maryland Transit Administration has a plan, **MARC Growth and Transformation Plan**<sup>1</sup> that this bill will help become a reality by generation of a group to work within the DOT to make the goals and plans in this document happen.

This bill will establish the Maryland Area Rail Commuter (MARC) Rail Authority and the powers and duties of the MARC Rail Authority, acting on behalf of the Department of Transportation, with respect to the supervision, construction, operation, maintenance, and repair of MARC railroad facilities projects. It will accomplish this goal through authorizing the MARC Rail Authority to issue certain revenue bonds to finance the cost of MARC railroad facilities. It will manage the funding required for the implementation of any plans through establishing the MARC Rail Authority Fund. It will also detail funding sources by requiring certain funds and revenues to be deposited in the Fund.

The Maryland Department of Environment's Climate Pathway Report<sup>2</sup> acknowledges the critical function reducing Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) provides in achieving the state's climate targets and the positive environmental impact of incentivizing consumers to drive less and purchase smaller vehicles. The Pathway Report also references important strategies to meet these goals, including **improving and expanding public transit** (emphasis added). The MARC system is a critical and

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.mta.maryland.gov/marc-growth-plan>

<sup>2</sup>

<https://mde.maryland.gov/programs/air/ClimateChange/2031%20GHG%20REDUCTION%20PLAN%20STAKEHOLDER%20LETTERS/Maryland%20Climate%20Partners%20Comments.pdf>

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important part of the overall Climate plans in Maryland, this bill will facilitate that component of the plan structure.

**I respectfully urge this committee to return a favorable report on HB#/0517.**