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January 29, 2025

The Honorable Marc Korman, Chair. Regina Boyce, Vice Chair
Members of the House Environment and Transportation Committee

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RE: Support HB48

As the Director for the Maryland Safety and Legislative Board for the Transportation Division of the International Association of Sheet Metal, Air, Rail and Transportation Worker's (SMART) and on behalf of our members, I urge a favorable report for HB-48 – *Railroad Companies – Condemnation Authority – Application*.

We are the largest rail labor union in North America. Our members in Maryland are employees of CSX Transportation, Norfolk Southern, Canton Railroad, AMTRAK and MARC (Alstom and Amtrak). We work as conductors, engineers, switchmen, trainmen, utility persons and yardmasters. We operate freight and passenger trains that travel throughout the State of Maryland, the Northeast Corridor and the United States of America. SMART represents over 230,000 members in the USA.

HB48 would prohibit a railroad that is powered by a magnetic levitation propulsion system from using railroad eminent domain powers to acquire private property in the State.

In 2015, the Baltimore Washington Rapid Rail acquired a defunct railroad company in Maryland that had been abandoned by the WB&A Electric Railway for nearly 80 years. The only logical reason for this is so that BWRR can utilize the legacy eminent domain powers that bygone railroad company has to take private property from the residents of Maryland who would refuse to cooperate with their agenda.

Our current Amtrak and MARC rail systems, which can meet the needs of rail travel between Washington DC, BWI Airport, and Baltimore City, are in great need of investment to maintain and modernize their systems. With our current budget deficit, it makes no sense to divert much-needed dollars to a new system with cost estimates ranging from \$10 billion to \$26.5 billion. Especially to a system that would only decrease travel time between these cities by approximately 15 minutes and undoubtedly mostly be used by a few residents who are in the upper income tax brackets.

At a time when income inequality, as a result of the disparity in opportunities is so obvious, we don't need to exacerbate this problem by investing in an ultra-expensive unnecessary system. Maglev is to trains what the Concorde was to planes, and we know how that ended....badly.

Thank you for your time and consideration of our position on this matter.

Sincerely,

David Pendleton Sr., Chairperson/Director
Maryland Safety & Legislative Board, LO-023
SMART Transportation Division