

February 12, 2025

**Written Testimony in Favor of HB0400 – State Finance – Prohibited Appropriations –Magnetic Levitation Transportation System (cross-file SB0055)**

Chair Korman, Vice Chair Boyce, and Members of the Environment and Transportation Committee,

My name is Denise Hamler, a participant of Maryland Coalition for Responsible Transit, submitting written testimony as an individual. I am speaking in support of HB0400, sponsored by Delegates Williams, Bartlett, Chang, Fennell, Healey, Ivey, Martinez, and Rogers. This bill would prohibit Baltimore-Washington Rapid Rail (BWRR) from appropriating funds from Maryland to build the proposed SCMaglev transportation system, “providing that the prohibition does not apply to certain expenditures for salaries” of state employees.

- 1) This exception is responsive to and directly addresses concerns expressed by Northeast Maglev that a previous iteration of this bill had unintended consequences in that it would inadvertently tie their hands to work with the appropriate state personnel to acquire permits or other required approvals should the project go forward.
- 2) I understand that BWRR is actively seeking additional funding from the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act funds and other grant sources to continue to tap into federal taxpayer funds. A private company, BWRR repeatedly has stated in their arguments in opposition to this bill that, while they do not need state funds, they want them to be available just in case financial support is needed “later” in the project’s implementation.

Maryland’s viable transportation projects that serve our communities currently face persistent state funding difficulties. The SCMaglev project, promoted as an eventual fast travel option from Washington DC to New York is not the kind of commuter train needed for the Northeast Corridor. Extremely costly, the projected costs will increase exponentially if/when actual work is started.

We donot want this scenario to take place: If and when BWRR has economic barriers to completing the project to come to Maryland or federal government for funds. Government funds are taxpayer dollars. We the people will pay—and already have from the chunk of federal government funds allocated and expended to undertake the study and meet NEPA requirements.

The Japanese government intends to invest in the SCMaglev project, thereby becoming a BWRR partner. They will own an undetermined percentage of this project. Their technology and expertise will anchor the construction and operation of SCMaglev. I do not relish the Japanese owning a piece of Maryland’s Northeast Corridor and demanding repayment should the project falter or perhaps not be able to be finished.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony favorable to HB0400, which I look forward to moving out of committee.

Respectfully,

Denise Hamler

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