



Subject: Response to Ian Rainey's Unfavorable Testimony

To: Delegate Nicole Williams and the Environment and Transportation Committee
Bill: HB0400 – State Finance – Prohibited Appropriations – Magnetic Levitation Transportation System

Organization: Maryland Coalition for Responsible Transit

Position: Favorable

Hearing Date: February 14, 2025

The Maryland Coalition for Responsible Transit (MCRT) provided written and oral testimony at the February 14 hearing on HB0400. The MCRT evaluates transit projects for technical and economic viability, environmental and community health impacts, environmental justice, and community accessibility. We represent a statewide coalition of communities, civic organizations, environmental groups, and residents.

We are concerned about comments made by BWRR Senior Vice President Ian Rainey in his unfavorable testimony and responses to questions by the committee. In this letter, we address what we consider misleading or incorrect statements.

A. The Committee asked Mr. Rainey to provide them the 2020 Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) he referred to in his comments; MDOT/FRA <http://www.bwmaglev.info>. There were myriad responses to the DEIS stating grave concerns from local authorities, civic organizations, and NGOs, including the City of Greenbelt, The Coalition for Smarter Growth, and the CATO institute. The MCRT submitted a 400-page response with detailed comments from experts in the related fields, including legal issues. This is the link: https://aa247ef8-bd4a-4dd2-890c-8b5ebdf396e2.filesusr.com/ugd/6d0640_12074e36746044e08fccd7a57f081409.pdf. It is also accessible through the MCRT website under “SCMaglev Opposition.”

B. Mr. Rainey stated several times that the information in the DEIS was not from BWRR; rather, from the Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) or other sources. Below is a short version of the NEPA process to produce a DEIS.

1. The MDOT/ Federal Railroad Administration (FRA)EIS is the process that studies the impact of the SCMaglev on the natural and human environments. It is funded by the FRA. A private contractor, AECOM, generated the SCMaglev Draft EIS. It was overseen by the Maryland Transportation Administration.

The EIS process incorporated various engineering and study inputs from the Baltimore-Washington Rapid Rail (BWRR) company to generate several documents for the FRA to use in their project evaluation and decision on the project. Key data used to develop the EIS are not independent of BWRR, as Mr. Rainey implied. These include but are not limited to:

- GIS data
- Traffic studies
- Ridership studies (see below)
- Greenhouse gas studies
- Engineering drawings
- Architectural drawings

C. The financial sustainability of the SCMaglev relies almost entirely on ridership.

1. The numbers given in the DEIS were calculated prior to the Covid pandemic. The transportation picture has changed significantly since then. Numbers from five years ago would not be an accurate basis to project the economic viability of a system that would not be operational well into the next decade.
2. The calculations for ridership are not available to the public. The MCRT submitted two FOIA requests and has received highly redacted BWRR ridership documents that provide no information. There is no reason that calculations so key to the viability of the project should be proprietary.
3. Dr. Owen Kelley discussed the diminishing returns from ridership in a blog dated January 21, 2023: <https://www.greenbeltonline.org/maglev2023jan/>