



MARYLAND  
ADVOCATES FOR  
SUSTAINABLE  
TRANSPORTATION

February 25, 2020

Environment and Transportation Committee  
House Office Building, Room 251  
Annapolis, MD 21401

**HB 1236 – Maryland Area Regional Commuter Train – Expansion of Service (Support)**

**Testimony for February 27, 2020**

Thank you, Chair Barve, Vice Chair Stein, and Environment and Transportation Committee members. This testimony is submitted on behalf of the Maryland Advocates for Sustainable Transportation, a coalition of 25 non-profit and community advocacy organizations committed to collaboration and coordination among local jurisdictions and the state for major transportation projects. We urge you to support HB 1236.

HB 1236 would require the Maryland Transit Administration (MTA) to begin negotiations with other regional transit authorities in order to increase commuter rail connectivity between Maryland; Washington, DC; and Virginia. Specifically, HB 1236 would aim to establish a connection from Maryland Area Regional Commuter (MARC) to Alexandria Station in Virginia by way of Union Station and L'Enfant Plaza in the District of Columbia, and Crystal City in Arlington.

Expanding MARC service to Virginia and the District of Columbia will increase access to job opportunities for Marylanders while making use of existing infrastructure. Our region is becoming increasingly interconnected, but we need to ensure that all Marylanders have a way to sustainably access new job opportunities. Reliable transit to job centers, such as Amazon's HQ2, will ensure that Maryland continues to thrive as a center of vibrant economic opportunity.

Maryland has some of the worst traffic in the country. Increasing transit service has been shown to increase ridership, leading to fewer single-occupancy vehicles on the road. This legislation has the potential to alleviate congestion and reduce carbon emissions that accelerate the climate crisis. Given the short window of time for meaningful action on climate change, expanding transportation options is an imperative.

Rather than spending billions of dollars to expand highways that will only briefly, if at all, alleviate congestion, it makes more sense to expand commuter rail service using existing infrastructure. This proposal is cost-effective, forward-thinking, and good for the entire region. For these reasons, we urge you to support HB 1236. Thank you.

**Signers:**

Audubon Naturalist Society  
Coalition for Smarter Growth  
Greater Farmland Civic Association  
Howard County Climate Action

League of Women Voters of Montgomery County  
Maryland Legislative Coalition  
National Parks Conservation Association  
Transition Howard County