



March 5, 2020

The Honorable Kumar P. Barve, Chair
The Honorable Dana Stein, Vice-Chair
Members of the Environment & Transportation Committee
Room 251
House Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland

**Re: Requesting a Favorable Report for HB1236 –
The First Step for MARC Commuters Act**

Dear Chairman Barve and Members of the Committee –

Good afternoon, my name is Andy Vanhorn. I am an Executive Vice President of Development at JBG SMITH, a publicly traded real-estate investment trust headquartered in Bethesda. JBG SMITH owns, operates, invests in and develops real estate assets concentrated in leading urban infill submarkets in and around Washington, D.C., including National Landing, where we serve as Amazon's development partner for their HQ2 initiative. I also chair the board of the National Landing Business Improvement District, a non-profit representing approximately 12 million square feet of office space, 12,000 residential units, 5,500 hotel rooms and 1.4 million square feet of retail. And finally, but perhaps as importantly, I'm also a resident of Kensington in Montgomery County.

I'm here today in all those capacities to offer our strong support for HB 1236, and to highlight the opportunity it represents for Maryland to leverage its extraordinary rail transit network to drive economic growth and expand access to opportunity. National Landing is poised for significant job growth in the coming decades, fueled by planned growth from Amazon, Virginia Tech and others. Sustaining that growth will require attracting large numbers of knowledge workers from across the region, the majority of whom will commute by public transportation.

With its highly educated workforce and robust transit network, Maryland is conceptually well poised to benefit from this trend. However, MARC's existing service pattern hinders that opportunity by requiring commuters to make multiple transfers to reach National Landing. By providing for a "one-seat ride" to National Landing, HB 1236 would substantially improve conditions for existing Maryland commuters from Montgomery, Frederick, Baltimore, Prince George's, Harford, Anne Arundel and Howard Counties while bringing thousands more residents upward economic mobility. At the same time, expanding MARC service to Northern Virginia would provide new housing opportunities for thousands of employees, who could now choose to move their families to Baltimore, Laurel, Silver Spring or Kensington and be within easy commuting distance of their jobs. In short, this bill would be a game changer for Maryland.



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The timing of this effort is especially important. Virginia's recent agreement with CSX paves the way for a dramatic expansion of passenger rail capacity across the Potomac. Indeed, Virginia has already announced their own plans for additional passenger rail service once the new Long Bridge opens and is prepared to work with Maryland to expand cross-border connectivity. If Maryland is to take advantage of this once in a generation opportunity, the planning must start now. At the same time, thousands of new jobs are being created every year in National Landing, and prospective employees are making decisions about where to live in real time. The proposed pilot service will send a powerful signal to existing residents and newcomers alike that Maryland is easily within reach.

We applaud Delegate Solomon for his commitment to expanding regional mobility and look forward to working with him and the MTA to implement this visionary pilot program. In particular, we stand ready to work with others in the private sector in MD, VA and DC to explore potential public-private financing and operating agreements to help make this vision a reality.

Respectfully,

Andy Vanhorn

Executive Vice President, Development

JBG SMITH