

Town of Bladensburg

Council Members

Ward I

Cris Mendoza

Jocelyn Route



Mayor

Takisha James

Council Members

Ward I

Carletta Lundy

Marilyn Blount

January 25, 2021

Honorable Senator Guy Guzzone
Chairman, Maryland State Senate, Budget & Taxation Committee
3 West
Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

Dear Chairman Guzzone, Vice Chair Rosapepe, and Members of the Budget and Taxation Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in favor of SB0188, entitled State Finance – Prohibited Appropriations – Magnetic Levitation Transportation System, which is also cross filed in the House as HB0063 with the same title.

As elected officials, we have a responsibility to protect our residents (and their residences), schools, places of worship, businesses, national park land and waterfront parks, federally owned property and vital federal government agencies located within our municipalities. All these important assets as well as the delicate ecosystems found in our communities must be protected against projects that ignore their importance to the prosperity and quality of life of Maryland residents.

The proposed SCMaglev train project places all of these assets in jeopardy and also puts taxpayers at risk of being financially responsible for the project should it prove economically unviable for the developer. For the sake of comparison, the California bullet train began with an estimated cost of \$6 billion, but by 2020 costs were projected to be \$80.3 billion. The SCMaglev is following the same trend, such that if the developer is unable to secure the necessary funding to bridge the financial gap, taxpayers could be held responsible for subsidizing it. In addition, of particular concern is the financial uncertainty this project inherently brings to bear. It is not recession-proof. An economic downturn such as what we experienced in the Great Recession of 2008 or the recent COVID-19 pandemic, which has resulted in significant financial devastation and job loss to many across this great state, could jeopardize the developers' ability to finish the project. Northeast Maglev cannot guarantee this project is recession-proof and would be able to survive these kinds of extenuating circumstances, which could occur at any time without warning.

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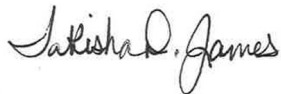
Testimony for SB0188-Mayor James

SB0188 would serve the residents of the Town of Bladensburg, Prince George's County, and the entire state of Maryland by ensuring taxpayers do not end up being on the hook for this expensive and sure-to-be overrun project should the developer decide to walk away from it or be unable to fully fund it. Should this project move forward, it is critical that all Marylanders are protected from the responsibility of bailing it out should it prove to be an unsuccessful privately-funded project.

I applaud Senator Pinsky for gathering input from communities that would be affected by this train and for being responsive to our concerns by seeking to take action with SB0188. This proposed legislation will provide much-needed protection for taxpayers to ensure we Marylanders are not left holding the bag for this lofty project.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Takisha D. James".

Takisha D. James

Mayor, Town of Bladensburg