



January 18, 2021

Written Testimony for [SB199](#)- Maryland Transit Administration Funding (Transit Safety & Investment Act)

Position: Favorable

Submitted by Denisse Guitarra

Maryland Conservation Advocate, Audubon Naturalist Society (ANS)

Dear Senate Budget and Taxation Committee,

For 124 years, Audubon Naturalist Society has inspired people to enjoy, learn about and protect nature. We thank the Senate Budget and Taxation Committee for the opportunity to provide testimony for SB199 - Maryland Transit Administration Funding (Maryland Transit Safety & Investment Act).

In July 2019, the Maryland Transit Administration (MTA) released its first ever Capital Needs Inventory (CNI) to assess the MTA's ongoing, unconstrained capital needs. The CNI identified \$5.7 billion of capital needs over the next ten years, \$1.5 billion of which is an accumulated backlog of deferred maintenance. The Maryland Department of Transportation's FY 2021–2026 Consolidated Transportation Program (CTP) does not provide the MTA sufficient funding to address the annual maintenance and repairs identified in the CNI. In fact, at current funding levels the maintenance backlog will grow.

The result of the neglected maintenance is buses, light rail vehicles, subway trains and commuter trains that break down more frequently than the MTA's peer agencies, and in some cases, more often than any transit agency in the nation. This leads to poor service which leads to drops in ridership. SB199 will mandate that MTA's capital budget be at a level that allows it to address all of the needs identified and get the system back into a state of good repair so that it can operate safely and reliably.

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Transportation is the number one source of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions in Maryland and the USA. In order to combat climate change, the state must reduce its GHG emissions by investing more in transit to safely and efficiently move people around outside of their cars. SB199 will provide a much-needed reprioritization of funds to make Maryland's transit systems more reliable, safe, and efficient. By investing in transit, the state secures protection of our valuable green spaces and waterways--as opposed to highway expansions, which would only degrade these precious spaces by incentivizing sprawl development patterns.

ANS has had a long history of opposing highway projects and supporting transit as the alternative to protect nature from sprawl. ANS supports SB199 because under today's climate change, public health, social, and economic crises investing in more transit is an equitable and sustainable solution to move forward. On behalf of ANS and our 28,000 members and supporters, we recommend that the Senate Budget and Taxation Committee supports the passage of SB199.

Sincerely,

Denisse Guitarra
Audubon Naturalist Society
Maryland Conservation Advocate