



POSITION STATEMENT

TESTIMONY PRESENTED TO THE HOUSE AND ENVIRONMENT AND TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

HOUSE BILL 704 – LAND USE – MAGNETIC LEVITATION TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM SITING (MARYLAND STOP THE MAGLEV ACT OF 2021)

Sponsor: Delegate Ivey

February 11, 2021

DONALD C. FRY
PRESIDENT & CEO
GREATER BALTIMORE COMMITTEE

Position: Oppose

House Bill 704 would prohibit any person from constructing a magnetic levitation (Maglev) transportation system within two miles of a “protected property,” as defined by the bill. Additionally, the bill prohibits a State, regional, or local governmental unit from approving a proposal for the construction, or approving the condemnation of property for the construction, of a Maglev within two miles of a protected property.

House Bill 704 is an attempt to make it more difficult or even impossible to achieve the goal of high-speed rail in the Northeast Corridor, particularly between Baltimore and Washington. Rather than taking steps to impede progress, the State should be removing barriers to progress. The Greater Baltimore Committee endorses the efforts of Baltimore Washington Rapid Rail (BWRR) to help resolve the long-recognized need for high speed in this corridor.

The Northeast Corridor encompasses a population of over 50 million people. Delays on our highways have tripled in the last 30 years. The Baltimore-Washington region now features 52 percent of the worst highway bottlenecks in the country and auto travel is expected to increase by 22 percent by 2040. The Baltimore Washington SCMAGLEV (superconducting magnetic levitation) project would connect two urban centers thereby reducing congestion and expanding opportunities for business growth.

Meanwhile, our railways are operating on more than 100-year-old infrastructure with alignments not suitable for high-speed travel. Freight and passenger rail share the same tracks. Approximately 75 percent of all weekday commuter rail ridership in the U.S. is on the Northeast Corridor. Rather than taking incremental steps to patch the existing system, it is time for an integrated bold approach to help solve our nation’s transportation problems.

Maryland must encourage transportation and infrastructure like the Baltimore-Washington SCMAGLEV to usher the Northeast Corridor into the future and bring the region to the forefront of technology and transportation in the United States.

One of the Greater Baltimore Committee’s legislative priorities for 2021 is advocating for balanced transportation and mobility policy and funding priorities that create interconnected, multimodal transportation networks and promote equitable investment in systems across regions, modes, and communities. Investment in high-speed rail systems is a key component in the creation of an ideal transportation network.

For the reasons stated above, the Greater Baltimore Committee urges an unfavorable report on House Bill 704.

The Greater Baltimore Committee (GBC) is a non-partisan, independent, regional business advocacy organization comprised of hundreds of businesses -- large, medium and small -- educational institutions, nonprofit organizations and foundations located in Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Carroll, Harford, and Howard counties as well as Baltimore City. The GBC is a 66-year-old, private-sector membership organization with a rich legacy of working with government to find solutions to problems that negatively affect our competitiveness and viability.

GREATER BALTIMORE COMMITTEE

111 South Calvert Street • Suite 1700 • Baltimore, Maryland • 21202-6180

(410) 727-2820 • www.gbc.org