

To Whom it May Concern,

Please accept this Late Testimony as I missed the deadline for submitting this for the February 12 hearing. I appreciate the opportunity to have my voice heard albeit outside of the hearing.

Susan Barnett

Below is my testimony in favor the HB0063.

To the Honorable Chair Barve and all members of the Environment and Transportation Committee:

I am writing in favor of HB0063 for the following reasons.

1. The State needs to protect its funds and reserve them for necessary transportation and infrastructure needs.
2. The State needs to prepare for the changing scenarios the impending Climate Crisis (projected for 8-9 years from now) will create for how we work, travel and live; we need to carefully attend to the footprint of projects we fund.
3. The State needs to analyze how the changes brought on by the pandemic will impact the need for various transit systems given the quick adaptation that has been made to virtual meetings.

Below is detailed information related to each of the above 3 points:

1. The State needs to protect its funds and reserve them for necessary transportation and infrastructure needs.

- Given that the Maglev is projected to cost at least 16-20 billion dollars (and likely more) the state will not be able to cover such an expense and still maintain the essential maintenance and upgrades of transportation and infrastructure projects throughout its districts.
- Given that the Maglev is considered a “luxury” transit option it makes sense that no state funding be allocated for the high ticket priced and limited service this project will provide if it is ever completed.

2. The State needs to prepare for the changing scenarios the impending Climate Crisis (projected for 8-9 years from now) will create for how we work, travel and live; we need to carefully attend to the footprint of future projects that the state funds.

- Based on recent research, the construction of the SCMaglev will generate more greenhouse gases than it will save for likely several decades. We do not have decades to wait for such a “possibility”. In addition, the project will destroy hundreds of acres of wild green spaces including a forest preserve, wetlands and wildlife refuge all of which are needed for CO2 storage, clean air and water, and climate cooling.
- Given that there has not been an analysis made of how we need to adapt to climate change within the next 8-9 years, protecting the state from losing funding for needed transportation and infrastructure projects throughout the state makes complete sense.

3. The State needs to analyze how the changes brought on by the pandemic will impact the need for various transit systems given the quick adaptation that has been made to virtual meetings.

- The current pandemic has created an economic crisis and we do not yet know what the endpoint of this will be. In addition, the pandemic has demonstrated the resourcefulness of our various institutions. Traditional practices for every type of organization, business, school, etc., have been challenged and shifted dramatically. Just as with this meeting of the Environment and Transportation Committee, we have found that we no longer need or must travel (in cars or on transit systems) to attend a meeting or to collect in ways previously thought to be necessary.
- Virtual meetings will likely replace many of the previously used in-person meetings. This will change the need for travel. The SCMaglev has not considered this change in its ridership projections. This factor will alter the use of all transit systems. Indeed, most transit systems are struggling to maintain basic service right now.
- The SCMaglev is considered a luxury service and as such will be in less demand given this shift away from in-person meetings. And as such it is not deserving of state funding.

Thank you for your consideration of these points. In light of these crucial issues, I believe the state is correct to protect its transportation and infrastructure funding for necessary (not luxury) projects. The State needs to be prepared to adapt quickly, practically and effectively to serve the needs of the whole state, not those of a few.

Sincerely,

Susan Barnett
12 Plateau Place, Unit H
Greenbelt, MD 20770