

Town of Bladensburg

Council Members

Ward I

Cris Mendoza

Jocelyn Route



Mayor

Takisha James

Council Members

Ward I

Carletta Lundy

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February 10, 2021

Honorable Delegate Kumar P. Barve
Chairman, House Environment & Transportation Committee
Room 251
House Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

Dear Chairman Barve, Vice Chair Stein, and Members of the Environment & Transportation Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in favor of HB0063, entitled State Finance – Prohibited Appropriations – Magnetic Levitation Transportation System, which is also cross filed in the Senate as SB0188 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 over \$80 billion. The SCMaglev is following the same trend, which raises concerns regarding the developers present and future ability to secure the necessary funding to bridge the financial gap as project costs continue to escalate. We must do our part to ensure taxpayers are not held responsible for subsidizing this project.

I'm especially concerned about 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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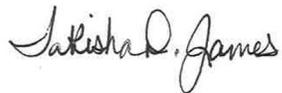
Testimony for HB0063-Mayor James

HB0063 would greatly protect 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.

I applaud Delegate Williams for seeking to codify protection for Marylanders to ensure we are not left with the bill for this project at any time in the future. I encourage the committee to please support this bill.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Takisha D. James". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'T' and 'J'.

Takisha D. James

Mayor, Town of Bladensburg