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The Honorable Kumar Barve, Chairman
Members of the House Environment & Transportation Committee

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Local 600
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Local 1949
ERIC BILSON

RE: Support HB-704

As the Maryland Legislative Director for the Transportation Division of the International Association of Sheet Metal, Air, Rail and Transportation Worker's (SMART) and on behalf of our members I urge support for HB-704.

We are the largest rail labor union in North America. Our members in Maryland are employees of CSX, Norfolk Southern Railway, Amtrak, Bombardier (MARC Service) and the Canton Railroad and work as conductors, engineers, switchmen, trainmen, utility persons and yardmasters. Our members operate freight and passenger trains that travel throughout the State of Maryland and throughout the entire Northeast Rail Corridor. SMART represents over 216,000 members throughout the country.

HB-704 would prohibit a person from constructing a magnetic levitation transportation system within 2 miles of certain property and prohibit units of State and local government from approving a proposal for the construction, or approve condemnation of property for the construction, of a magnetic levitation transportation system within 2 miles of a protected property. This is in line with our position opposing construction of any magnetic levitation system that would require local or state jurisdictions to contribute property or tax dollars for such a system.

Our current Amtrak and MARC rail systems, which by the way can meet the needs of rail travel between Washington and Baltimore, are in great need of investment to maintain and modernize their systems. It makes no sense to divert much-needed dollars to a new system with cost estimates from \$10 billion to as high as \$26.5 billion. Especially to a system that would only decrease travel time between these cities by approximately 15 minutes and undoubtedly mostly be used by residents in the upper income brackets.

At a time when income inequality as a result of the disparity in opportunities is so obvious, we don't need to exacerbate this problem by investing in an ultra-expensive unnecessary system. Maglev is to rail travel what the Concorde was to air travel, and we know how that ended. We don't want the same to happen and the State be left holding the bag.

Thank you for your time and consideration of our position on this matter.

Sincerely,

Lawrence E. Kasecamp
MD State Legislative Director
SMART Transportation Division