



POSITION STATEMENT

TESTIMONY PRESENTED TO THE SENATE BUDGET AND TAXATION COMMITTEE

HOUSE BILL 632 – BALTIMORE EAST-WEST CORRIDOR – TRANSIT STUDY - REQUIREMENTS Sponsor – Delegates Rosenberg, et al

March 29, 2022

**DONALD C. FRY
PRESIDENT & CEO
GREATER BALTIMORE COMMITTEE**

Position: Support

House Bill 632 would require the Department of Transportation to undertake all steps necessary to secure a record of decision for the Red Line and MARC Rail extension to the Johns Hopkins Bayview Medical Center. MDOT would also be required to prepare a plan for the funding and financing of the construction and operation of these projects. The bill requires a \$5 million appropriation from fiscal years 2024 to 2027 for the environmental impact study as well as a \$200,000 appropriation from the transportation trust fund to the Baltimore City Mayor’s Office of Workforce Development and Small, Minority, and Women-Owned Business Development.

Advocating for adequate transportation and mobility infrastructure in the Greater Baltimore region has been a longstanding priority of the Greater Baltimore Committee (GBC). The GBC was a strong proponent of the Red Line project and supported the 2013 revenue increase that was intended to provide a portion of the state funding for the project. Following the cancellation of the Red Line in 2015, the region has experienced significant disinvestment of state dollars in the transportation network, particularly in transit.

The GBC has long maintained that a superior transportation system is essential to the success of both businesses and residents. The construction of the Red Line and an extension of the MARC rail are key areas of opportunity for economic growth. According to multiple studies measuring the economic impact of these two projects, implementing this critical transportation infrastructure would generate billions of dollars in increased economic activity and thousands of direct and indirect jobs.

An October 2019 report by the Abell Foundation cited transportation as one of the top three systemic drivers that prevent more individuals in Baltimore from accessing job training and ultimately obtaining employment. Specifically, the report states that:

“The lack of reliable and affordable transportation to jobs is one of the greatest obstacles to scaling up training programs. Programs know that they can train and place a greater number of program graduates, but they limit expansion knowing that graduates will be unable to get to their new jobs. A number of programs reported that job growth in their target industry sector is concentrated in surrounding counties and/or is not accessible by public transportation, a problem that particularly impacts the most economically distressed neighborhoods of Baltimore” (page 19).

The GBC has consistently encouraged policymakers to implement 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. The creation of the Red Line would promote investment in east and west Baltimore City, areas that have historically been marginalized and overlooked by both the public and private sector.

GREATER BALTIMORE COMMITTEE

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

(410) 727-2820 • www.gbc.org

This bill is consistent with two of the key tenets in *Gaining a Competitive Edge: Keys to Economic Growth and Job Creation in Maryland*, a report published by the GBC that identifies eight core pillars for a competitive business environment and job growth. The pillars provide:

Superior transportation infrastructure with reliable funding mechanisms. An essential prerequisite of a competitive business environment includes well-funded and maintained highway, transit, port and airport infrastructure that provides reliable and efficient options to move people, goods and services.

Government leadership that unites with business as a partner. Maryland leaders must set a welcoming tone that communicates positive support for business, respect for the private sector as a partner, not an adversary, and reflects a strategic plan for business growth and job creation.

For these reasons, the Greater Baltimore Committee urges a favorable report on House Bill 632.

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 67-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.