



Olivia Bartlett, DoTheMostGood

Committee: Finance

Testimony on: SB0023 – Equity in Transportation Sector – Guidelines and Analyses

Position: Favorable

Hearing Date: January 26, 2022

Bill Contact: Senator Jill Carter

DoTheMostGood (DTMG) is a progressive grass-roots organization with more than 3000 members across all districts in Montgomery County as well as a number of nearby jurisdictions. DTMG supports legislation and activities that keep residents healthy and safe in a clean environment and which promote equity across all our diverse communities. DTMG strongly supports SB0023 because it will make equity a primary goal of Maryland’s Transportation Plan.

All Marylanders, regardless of race, income, zip code, or disability should have an equal right to the benefits of a well-planned transportation system. HB0023, the Transportation Equity Act, will achieve this goal by:

- Requiring the Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) to report data annually on racial disparities in transportation and the impact of transportation disparities on persons with disabilities;
- Adding representatives from the Maryland State Conference NAACP and a transportation labor organization to the Attainment Advisory Committee;
- Creating a Commission on Transportation Equity as an independent body responsible for developing policies, guidelines, assurances, and performance measures to ensure an equitable transportation system;
- Requiring transit equity analyses, cost benefit analysis, and outreach to affected communities before public hearings on any major service change;
- Requiring cross-modal analysis; and
- Increasing transparency by annual reporting and service change analysis reporting

Many people with disabilities and many low-income households do not have access to cars and lack of access to other modes of transportation disproportionately harms them. Without access to transportation, people with disabilities continue to be alienated from the economic mainstream. For example, people with disabilities are twice as likely to live in poverty, at least in part due to difficulty accessing jobs, education, and medical care. Because many individuals with disabilities have increased health care needs, isolation can have a profound impact on quality of life, health, and

safety. HB 0023 will require data collection and analysis of the impact of transportation on people with disabilities, and adds a representative of Disability Rights Maryland to the Commission on Transportation Equity that will be created.

Maryland also has a shameful history of racist transportation policies, from highways built through and dividing Black communities to the cancellation of the Red Line route, which would have provided urgently-needed access to jobs for residents in low-income, redlined communities in Baltimore and regional economy-transforming, transit-oriented-development. Equitable transportation will play a key role in addressing systemic racism by:

- Increasing access to good jobs, schools, education, and food;
- Providing incentives for community economic development;
- Reducing smog, air pollution, and heat islands, which disproportionately impact Black communities

Therefore, DTMG strongly supports SB0023 and urges a **FAVORABLE** report on this bill.

Respectfully submitted,

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