

Committee: House Environment and Transportation Committee
Testimony on: HB-0170 – State Finance – Prohibited Appropriations – Magnetic Levitation Transportation System
Speaker: Rhonda Kranz
Position: Favorable
Hearing Date: February 22, 2024

Thank you for the opportunity to submit oral testimony in Support of House Bill 170. My name is Rhonda Kranz. I live in Montgomery County and have been following the evolution of the proposed SCMaglev for several years. I will mention two issues today.

Maglev trains are not compatible with the State's existing transportation. They require their own operating systems and take massive amounts of land to build and operate. The permanent footprint of physical infrastructure for the proposed MCMaglev would be approximately 1400 acres. Over one-third is “laydown”, areas where construction waste is hauled and tools and other materials are stored. These areas would be situated close and far and up and down the entire structure. For perspective, the Disneyland sized maintenance yard would be 11% of the total acreage. Any future Maglev transportation system would need a comparable amount of land to build and maintain.

These numbers are for physical infrastructure only and do not include the impact area beyond. It does not include direct impacts on communities and environmentally sensitive areas, or distances of pollutants that are carried downstream to the Chesapeake Bay.

Why would Maryland need to build a new rail system when we have existing interstate and local transit? The Federal Railroad Administration, has developed a long-term vision and investment program with regional stakeholders. Billions of dollars have been committed and major upgrades to the existing Acela equipment that reach speeds comparable to Maglev trains.

Marylanders should not bear the cost, suffer further damage to our precious and limited natural resources, or impair our most vulnerable communities with Maglev technology, either now or in the future.

These are two of a long list of health, safety, financial, environmental justice, and ecological reasons I urge a FAVORABLE vote for HB0170.