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Judiciary Committee



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THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
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FIRST CLASS MAIL
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SCMAGLEV Project
c/o Lauren Molesworth
Maryland Transit Administration
6 Saint Paul Street
Baltimore MD 21202

Brandon Bratcher

Environmental Protection Specialist
USDOT Federal Railroad Administration
RPD-13: Environment and Corridor Planning Division
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
West Building, Mail Stop 20
Washington DC 20590

Jacqueline Thorne

Project Manager Priority Projects
The Secretary's Office
Office of Freight and Multimodalism
Maryland Department of Transportation
7201 Corporate Center Drive
Hanover MD 21076

Re: **SCMAGLEV Project**
Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) and Draft Section 4(f)
Evaluation

Dear Ms. Molesworth:

This letter is my office's comment to the DEIS that was released January 2021 for the SCMAGLEV Project. I recommend that the "No Build" option is the option that is recommended in the Final Environmental Impact Statement.

The project would disproportionately impact low-income communities and communities of color; undercut existing and future MARC and Amtrak service which are of far greater benefit to area residents; and cause irreversible damage to parks, streams, sensitive natural habitats, and world-renowned research stations. It would be unaffordable to most residents (\$60 from Baltimore to DC, vs \$48 on Acela and \$8 on MARC), and provide little time savings over the improved Amtrak Acela.

The DEIS did not include an evaluation of other transportation systems that can achieve the same purpose and fill the same need such as the Amtrak Acela service. The Acela service would achieve the same purpose without the enormous cost, disruption to existing communities and harm to environmental resources located along the proposed routes.

With this project 80 percent of the impacted land parcels are located in Environmental Justice communities. Maglev construction would plow through majority-Black Prince George's County, including the District that I represent. Additionally, there are no proposed stops in Prince George's County. Also, the \$60 average cost of a one-way ticket means that service would only be accessible for the wealthiest white-collar commuters which does not help alleviate traffic congestion between DC and Baltimore as alleged in the DEIS. Especially since we have seen with the COVID-19 pandemic the majority of those who were able to work from home and were not required to commute were our white-collar commuters on MARC. The most recent transportation studies show the changes in transportation across the country.

Maglev is expected to reduce 32 percent of MARC riders and 94 percent of annual Amtrak riders between Penn Station & Union Station. This decrease in ridership would be accompanied by a loss of fare revenue, and likely lead to poorer service. Additionally, if the federal government subsidizes the Maglev, it will divert funds that should go to MARC and Amtrak improvements. As someone who represents the Amtrak Station in New Carrollton, Maryland and several MARC stations including the stations at Seabrook, Riverdale Park, Greenbelt and New Carrollton this is very concerning for me and the constituents that I represent. The 15-minute Maglev trip would only be six minutes faster than the expected Amtrak Acela trip time following planned investments in Amtrak.

The project would remove up to 451 acres of forests and slash through up to 140.5 acres of recreational facilities and parklands. This includes the Greenbelt Forest Preserve and impacts to Greenbelt National Park. Moreover, Maglev would require twice the energy per passenger mile as Amtrak. This will result in increased energy usage by approximately 3.0 trillion additional BTUs per year which is enough energy to power around 88,900 homes.

For these reasons and many others, I ask that you recommend the "No Build" option as the recommend option in the Final Environmental Impact Statement.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'N. Williams', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Delegate Nicole A. Williams, Esq.