

# **Maryland Coalition for Responsible Transit and Citizens Against the SCMagLev SCMagLev is Not the Answer**

for

## **Deborah Haynie**

Representing Senator Van Hollen

May 26, 2021 @ 1:00 pm

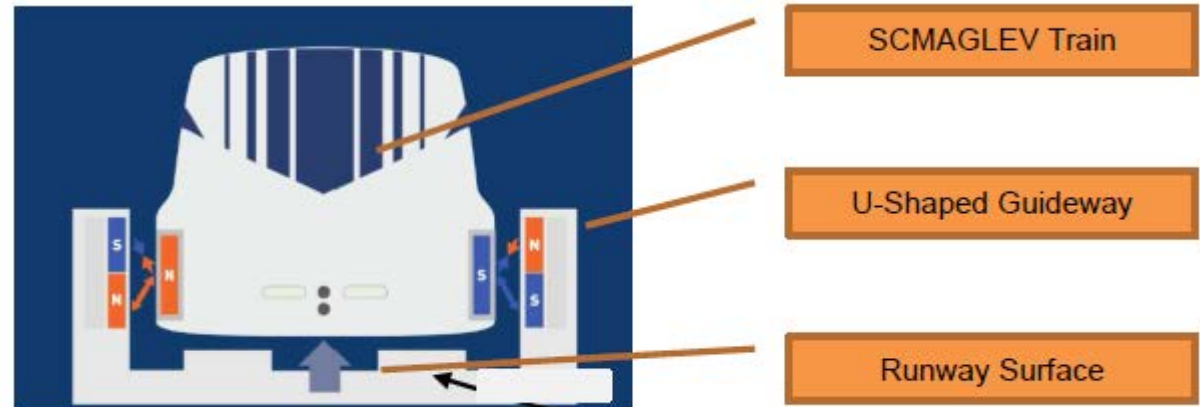
## **Today's Presentation Covers: MCRT's Expert Team Review of the SCMagLev DEIS and our Findings, Conclusions and Recommendations**

MCRT finds the SCMagLev DEIS is significantly deficient many critical areas, including:

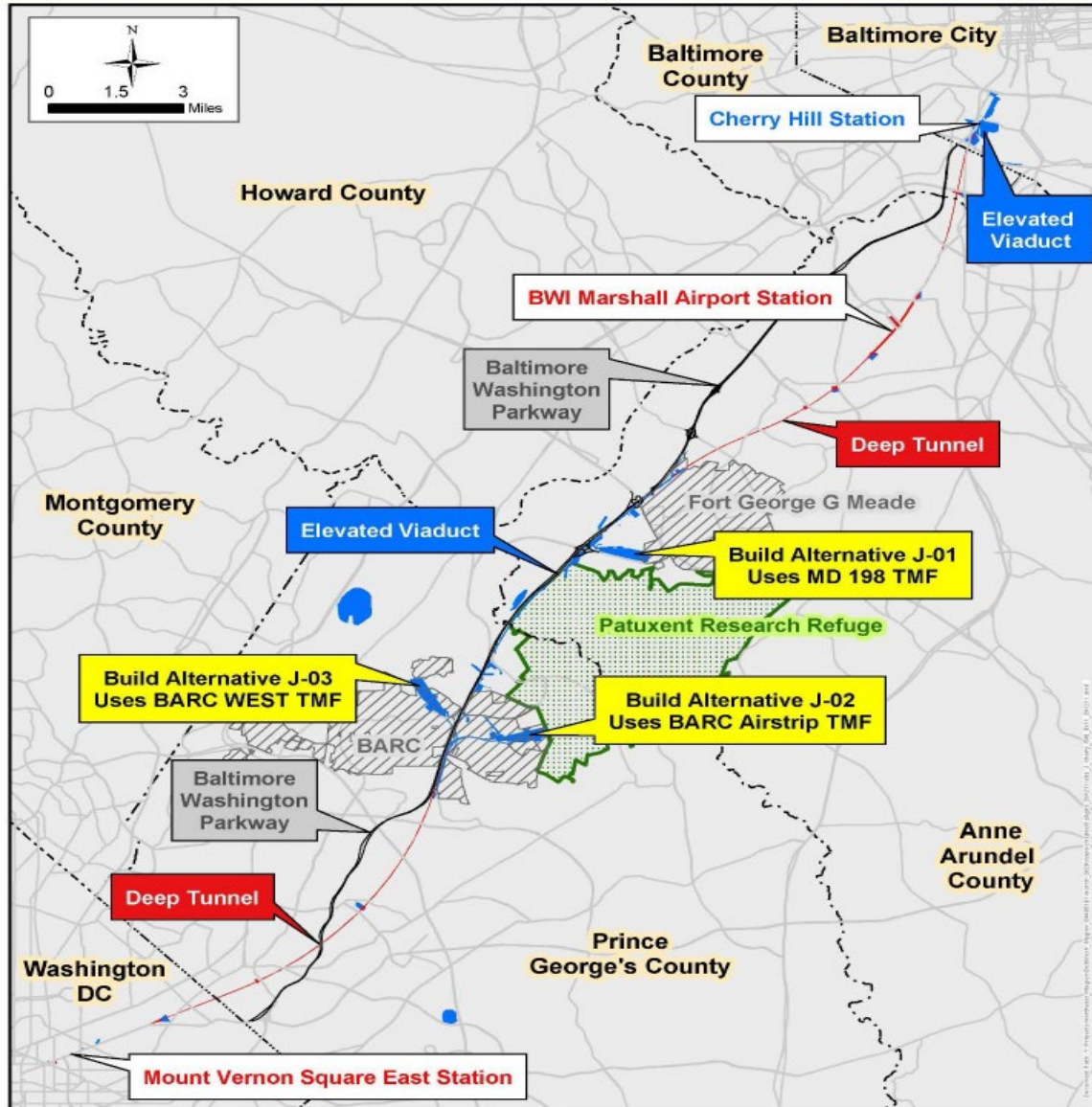
- addressing Federal and State Laws.
- addressing Safety and Crashworthiness.
- addressing Environmental Impact Issues.
- addressing Finance and Ridership Issues.
- addressing Impacts on Communities and Residents.
- addressing Impacts on Environmental Justice Communities.
- failure to present a NEPA requirement to compare SCMagLev to existing systems. Doing so would result in a Clearly Better Alternative - Amtrak & MARC.

## What is SCMagLev?

- Japan's Superconducting Magnetic Levitation (SCMagLev) train is a high-speed, ground-based passenger transportation system.
- SCMagLev trains run on a dedicated guideway, use an automatic train control system, and have no at-grade crossings.
- The project is being promoted by the Northeast Maglev (TNEM) to introduce and build in the northeast corridor of the United States at a projected cost of \$16 billion, with a \$27.8 million grant to develop the concept and prepare the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS).
- With the approval process started in November 2016, the short-term goal is to obtain Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) approval to build a SCMagLev train segment between Baltimore and Washington, D.C., with no passenger stops in Prince George's County.
- The long-term goal is to extend the train operation to New York City by way of Philadelphia, and eventually Boston.



Source: DEIS Appendix D.06: Aesthetics, Visuals, etc.



## The Proposed SCMagLev Route

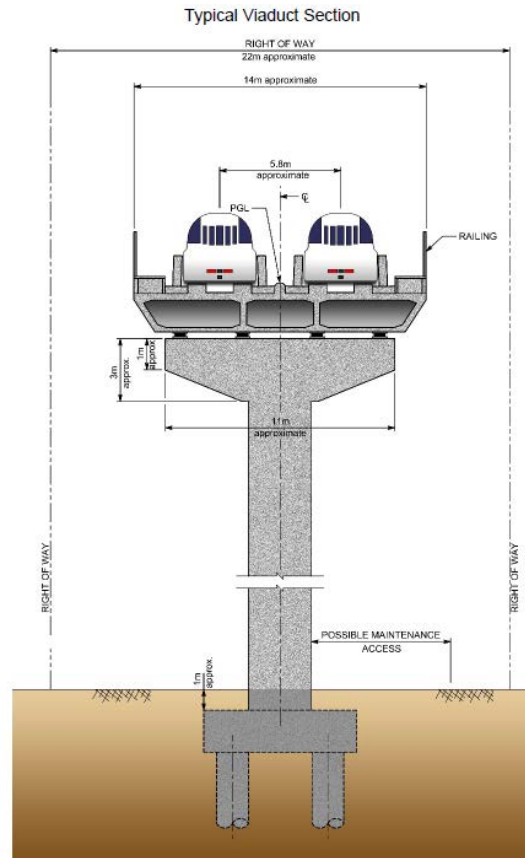
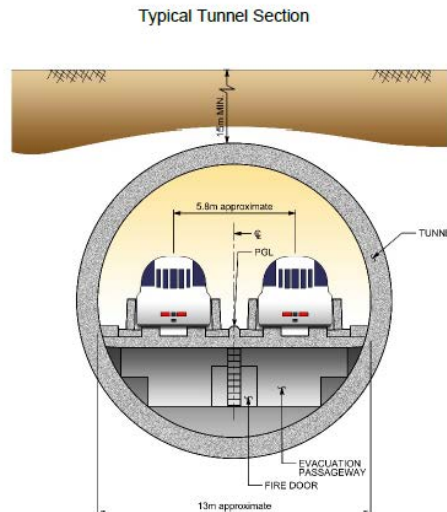
- To implement the system would include construction of power substations, ventilation facilities, one rolling stock depot (RSD), and other maintenance and/or ancillary facilities.

◀ Build Alternatives J-01 through J-03  
Projected Study Area Map source:  
Source: DEIS Appendix D.06: Aesthetics, Visuals, etc.



## SCMagLev

### ◀ Typical Tunnel and Viaduct Sections



- Tunneled section would run between 80 to 150 feet underground, as measures from the top of the guideway.
- Elevated sections would be up to 150 feet above the travel lanes of the Baltimore-Washington Parkway.

**That's 50 feet above tree-top level**

Source: DEIS Appendix D.06: Aesthetics, Visuals, etc.

## **The SCMagLev DEIS is significantly deficient in addressing Federal and State Laws**

### **MCRT Findings:**

- The DEIS fails to adequately address the requirements of federal and state law.
- The DEIS Statement of Purpose and Need and Alternatives Analysis impermissibly favors the SCMagLev Project over Viable Transit Alternatives outlined in the No Build Alternative.
- The DEIS Violates NEPA Segmentation Principles by limiting the scope of analysis to the Washington-to-Baltimore Corridor and ignoring the Project's Sponsor's clear plan to eventually extend the SCMagLev to the New York and Boston.
- The DEIS fails to adequately address the greenhouse gas impact of the project.
- The Draft Section 4(f) Report to assess the project's use of parkland and historic resources was inadequate.
- The DEIS fails to adequately analyze the Project's impacts on meeting the Chesapeake Bay clean up goals.
- The DEIS inappropriately relies on future compliance with Federal and State Water Quality and Wetlands Permitting a burden that will be hard to meet given the Project's substantial impacts.
- The DEIS seriously understates the Project's impact on federal, and state Listed Rare, Threatened and Endangered (RTE) Species and their habitat.

## **The SCMagLev DEIS is significantly deficient in addressing Safety and Crashworthiness**

### **MCRT Findings:**

- The DEIS analysis of the Project's safety contains serious errors and omissions.
- The DEIS fails to adequately present data on the safety and crashworthiness of the SCMagLev and support structures and systems.
- The safety claims of JP Central, echoed by TNEM must be independently evaluated applying American Safety standard called Rules of Particular Applicability.
- The DEIS fails to present adequate information of the generation, storage and safe handling of liquid helium needed to super cool the SCMagLev magnets, and the emergency procedures to address cryogenic storage or systems failure.
- The DEIS fails to present adequate information on electricity generation, transmission and the full energy consumption needed to build and operate the SCMagLev, and presents contradicting information on the far higher energy requirements for the SCMagLev as compared to high-speed rail analyses originating in Japan.
- The DEIS lacks information on cyber security, physical security, and terrorism attack planning, or on who pays the costs associated with maintaining the security envelop surrounding the SCMagLev physical structures.

## Crashworthiness & Other Safety Concerns



Photos of the September 22, 2006 German Transrapid International maglev crash in Lathen, Germany.



- Justifications for the ongoing building of their SCMagLev are being questioned in Japan itself. The planned 2027 date for starting the first operation of the Tokyo to Nagoya is unlikely to be met. This would make the United States the first place where the safety of SCMagLev technology would be tested in high-frequency commercial operation.



## The SCMagLev DEIS is significantly deficient in addressing Environmental Impact Issues

### MCRT Findings:

- The first of its kind “taking” protected and preserved public land by a private company to build and operate a for profit business, opening the door for business and industrial development on all public protected lands.
- The DEIS understates and omits environmental impacts in key areas of drinking water, water quality, ground water, wetlands, watersheds, climate change, air quality, parkland, historic sites, light pollution, noise pollution, and endangered and threatened species, among others.
- The DEIS fails to adequately address the greenhouse gas impacts from the tremendous energy use needed for the project.
- The DEIS fails to adequately analyze the project’s Impacts on meeting the Chesapeake Bay clean-up goals.
- The DEIS fails to include the Project Sponsor’s Joint Permit Application, making it difficult to provide meaningful comments for permits needed to authorize those impacts.
- The DEIS does not adequately analyze the project’s serious impacts on federal and state listed rare, endangered, and threatened species, and on one of the largest dinosaur fossil sites in the world.

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## **The SCMagLev DEIS is significantly deficient in addressing Environmental Impact Issues**

### **MCRT Findings:**

- The DEIS underestimates the disruption, fragmentation, and complete destruction of protected lands, and the disruptive impacts to Department of Agriculture and NASA research and operations.
- The DEIS fails to explain how known contaminated site soils will be removed, treated and disposed of in an environmentally safe manner.

## **The SCMagLev DEIS is significantly deficient in addressing Finance and Ridership Issues**

### **MCRT Findings:**

- The DEIS fails to provide the financial, ridership, job creation, and other required data and analyses to substantiate their benefit claims and the viability of their financial model and forecasts.
- The DEIS economic and ridership analysis is based on inaccurate assumptions and outdated traffic data. In particular, the FRA provided a heavily redacted ridership and demand study that makes it extremely challenging to provide meaningful comments and analysis.
- The DEIS provides insufficient information on the ticket pricing, and the relationship of ticket revenue to financial requirements to operate, maintain, service debt and taxes.
- The DEIS does not provide information on the Project's risk management, Project failure and decommissioning costs, including responsibility for these significant costs should the Project fail.
- The DEIS traffic analyses during construction and operation are seriously inadequate and significantly underestimate traffic impacts, and overestimate any net traffic improvements.
- The DEIS does not provide any analyses or estimates on the impact on ridership demand and traffic reductions resulting from the massive use of telework during the COVID-19 pandemic.

## **The SCMagLev DEIS is significantly deficient in addressing Impacts on Communities and Residents**

### **MCRT Findings:**

- The DEIS understates or ignores the impacts on communities and residents through which the SCMagLev will travel, and the human and wildlife health harm the SCMagLev will bring, including the potential release of toxins, carcinogens, and radioactive gas into communities.
- The DEIS insufficiently discusses the impact of light and noise pollution on residents and communities, as well as the disruptive impacts on residents and communities during the multi-year construction phase.
- The DEIS promotes the “rosy picture” of beautiful structures traversing along side the BW Parkway, when reality from the actual system in Japan shows the fenced areas beneath the viaducts as ill kept, trash collectors, with patched access roads. This reality will destroy the original purpose for constructing the BW Parkway - providing a green and naturalize park-like environment to all travelling between Baltimore and Washington, D.C.
- The DEIS is inadequate in discussing the impacts of the tunnel boring machine launch and retrieval sites, equipment staging sites, and disusing the procedures and processes to be employed to safely handle the removed soil and spoils.

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## **The SCMagLev DEIS is significantly deficient in addressing Impacts on Communities and Residents**

### **MCRT Findings:**

- The DEIS fails to provide the detailed information on the hauling of the removed dirt and soil through communities, and the impact of the movement, sound, and vibration pollution generated by the heavy trucks as they continuously operate for the years of construction on the health of the affected residents, and the building structures exposed to the constant vibrations.
- The DEIS fails to present how water used during the tunnel boring will be sourced, the impact on the source, and how the used water will be collected and decontaminated, especially as known contaminate areas are tunneled through.
- The DEIS understates the impact the construction and operation of the SCMagLev will have on historic and cultural sites and resources, including identification of all of the significant cultural sites and resources that will be negatively affected.



## **The SCMagLev DEIS is significantly deficient in addressing Impacts on Environmental Justice Communities**

### **MCRT Findings:**

- The DEIS impacts and disproportionally on Environmental Justice (EJ) analyses are seriously deficient. The DEIS understates and fails to address the impact on and likely displacement of the residents and communities through which the SCMagLev will travel.
- The DEIS ignores the potential and likely use of eminent domain to take property, especially in EJ communities.

**The SCMagLev does not fit with the  
Biden Administration's Buy America,  
Build American, Environmental Protection or  
Environmental Justice focus.**

## **The SCMagLev DEIS is significantly deficient in addressing a NEPA requirement to compare SCMagLev to existing systems**

### **MCRT Findings:**

- The DEIS ignores there are existing high-speed ground-based transportation systems alternatives, namely Amtrak, Amtrak Acela and MARC. Comparison of the SCMagLev to these alternatives is a requirement of the NEPA process and not including this analysis, evaluation and comparison is a fatal flaw in the DEIS.
- The FRA completed a multi-year costly assessment of the Northeast Corridor Future Plan, and found the enhancement and upgrade plans outlined by Amtrak would meet the current and projected ridership requirement of the Northeast Corridor, and an additional alignment was too expensive, too disruptive, and not needed.
- The DEIS makes no mention, nor provides a comparison, of the superior financial solvency of Amtrak operations versus the SCMagLev. Nor does the DEIS mention or discuss the West Baltimore MARC Express Proposal that would provide the same service as the SCMagLev proposes, using existing MARC equipment and rail, with more convenient stations, at far lower cost to the ridership, which makes the MARC Express a far more attractive option for the majority of residents in and around Baltimore, and Washington, D.C., who would commute between the two cities.

## MCRT Conclusions

- The need for U.S. expert assessment of the safety of the train system, in a manner akin to the safety and crashworthiness assessments of Amtrak and other U.S. rail transportation systems.
- The need for the FRA to develop Rules of Particular Applicability (RPA) allowing public comment for the independent assessment of the SCMagLev system BEFORE the FRA completes and publishes their Record of Decision (ROD).
- The need for a full, independent expert assessment of the serious and irrecoverable environmental and ecological damage and destruction building the SCMagLev will bring to one of the last preserved research spaces on the East Coast so that the full cost to our state, counties, communities, and residents is identified.
- The need for a full independent expert assessment of the potential danger to human and wildlife health from emissions and pollution building and operating the SCMagLev will bring so these impacts are known and quantified.
- The need for an independent expert assessment of the financial viability of building and operating of the SCMagLev without the need of government subsidiaries (unlikely). If government subsidies are required (likely), quantify the full scope and size of the subsidies needed and identify the source of funds.

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## MCRT Conclusions

- The need for an independent expert assessment comparing the capabilities, negative consequences, costs, and benefits of building the SCMagLev versus continuing the enhancement and integration of the FRA's approved Amtrak Northeast Corridor (NEC) Future Plan. This assessment needs to include identifying, quantifying, and weighing the levels of integration these two competing systems have (or will have) with regional rail, bus, and other commuter services (such as the D.C. Metro), as well as the level of access and scope of the services offered to communities along the respective system's routes.
- An independent expert assessment of the impact on Amtrak from ridership and financial losses with the building and operating of the SCMagLev is needed. To maintain Amtrak viability, such ridership and financial loss will need to be addressed through increased government subsidies. The level of increased subsidies, identifying the source of funding for increased subsidies, and the impact the loss of these funds will have on addressing other higher-priority transportation infrastructure projects (e.g., roads, bridges, tunnels) needs to be identified and quantified.

## MCRT Recommendations

Given:

- The many legal requirements the DEIS must address yet failed to do so.
- The obvious financial uncertainties of the SCMagLev project and operation.
- The failure to provide the full scope of information required for independent analyses to ascertain the viability of the Project.
- The disruption, destruction and fragmentation of hundreds or acres of protected and fragile environment areas.
- The industrial levels of pollution released in our watershed and communities.
- No independent assessment and evaluation of the train, structures and systems to American safety standards on a system currently running on a test and development track.
- No NEPA required side-by-side comparison to existing ground-based high-speed transportation systems, such as Amtrak, Amtrak Acela and MARC, which are the far better alternatives than building an expensive, and likely to be subsidized by tax dollars, transportation system only the wealthy can afford to use on a regular basis.

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## MCRT Recommendations

**(1) Best Option: FRA select the No Build option.**

Over \$28 million of tax payer dollars have already been spent studying the cost and benefit of building the SCMagLev. The costs far outweigh any benefit. Stop the Project now and invest the saved tax dollars into fixing and upgrading existing transportation infrastructure (roads, bridges, tunnels) including Amtrak and regional rail systems such as MARC and VRE.

**(2) Alternative Option 1 of 2: Establish Rules of Particular Applicability.**

If the FRA decides to continue the consideration of building the SCMagLev - The FRA must establish American Safety Standards (Rules of Particular Applicability) and allow for public comment. The RPA MUST INDEPENDENTLY assess, evaluate and test support structures, support and operating systems, especially the cyber security strength, the crashworthiness and survivability of the train, and provide these analysis and findings to the public with a 180-day review and comment period, BEFORE any deliberation by the FRA on a decision to begin construction of the SCMagLev is considered.

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## MCRT Recommendations

### **(3) Alternative Option 2 of 2: Prepare a supplemental DEIS.**

With all of the deficiencies, missing and obfuscated information, missing analyses and data, identified during the review and analysis of the SCMagLev DEIS by a team of experts, as well as local city and county governments, community, civic, and environmental organizations, a supplemental DEIS should be assembled to address the comments, concerns, and questions, identified and provided to the FRA. This supplemental DEIS needs to be provided to the public with a 180-day review and comment, BEFORE any deliberation by the FRA on a decision to begin construction of the SCMagLev is considered.

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## For More Information and to Help Stop the SCMagLev

A copy of MCRT submission can be downloaded from [www.mcrt-action.org](http://www.mcrt-action.org).  
Click on the SCMaglev Opposition tab, and click on:

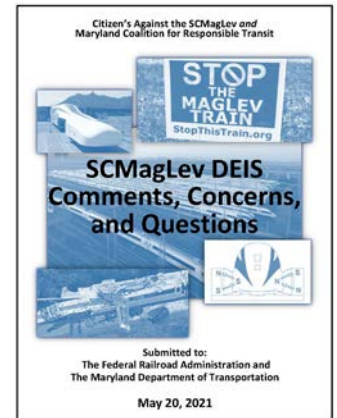
### “MCRT SCMagLev DEIS Comments”

If you prefer, we can send you a copy of our submission to your email address.

CATS & MCRT have also produced a series of short white papers on various issues, concerns and questions about the SCMagLev and the real cost to Anne Arundel County, Prince George’s County and our state. These informative reads can also be found at [www.mcrt-action.org](http://www.mcrt-action.org) under the “SCMaglev Opposition” tab.

We are available to meet and discuss the long list of reasons why the SCMagLev should not be built.

## - Support the NO BUILD option -



## Who is MCRT?

**The Maryland Coalition for Responsible Transit (MCRT)** formed in 2020, as more and more communities and organizations joined forces to oppose the building and operation of the SCMagLev. MCRT's mission is to evaluate transit projects for social equity, environmental justice, economic viability, and community accessibility. MCRT believes the Baltimore Washington SCMagLev must be stopped in order to implement future transit projects that meet the criteria of a much lower price, and much less risk and impact to communities. Thus, we support the no-build option and are working to stop this project through the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process, specifically by building public capacity to respond to the draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). MCRT is actively gathering and sharing information on the environmental, ecological, community and financial impacts building and operating the SCMagLev will have on communities, counties and the state of Maryland. For more information about MCRT and to make a donation to support the opposition to building the SCMagLev, go to: [www.mcrt-action.org](http://www.mcrt-action.org).

## Who is CATS?

**Citizens Against the SCMagLev (CATS)** formed in 2016 with the initial Baltimore-Washington Rapid Rail (BWRR) and the Northeast MagLev (TNEM) proposal to build the first phase of Japan's Superconducting Magnetic Levitation (SCMagLev) train between Baltimore and Washington, DC. BWRR's long-term goal is to build the SCMagLev systems to New York City by way of Philadelphia. As community residents and activists attended BWRR presentations describing their build plans and the operation of the SCMagLev and raised many questions and concerns not answered by BWRR. Residents came together to represent the interests of their communities and form CATS. CATS has evolved into a confederation of scientists, engineers, experts, community organizations, and citizens in support of transportation infrastructure improvements that benefit our communities, state, and nation. CATS opposes the construction of an expensive transportation system serving a small minority of the wealthy at the cost of taxpayer funds far better appropriated to maintain and improve the transportation infrastructure needed and used daily by all residents, businesses, and commercial entities. CATS leadership have written numerous articles and provided testimony on legislation in Annapolis, and have met with elected officials in Washington, DC, to share information that challenge the promises and claims made by BWRR. CATS has identified better high-speed rail and commuter rail alternatives, and presented analyses on the extreme environmental, ecological, community, and financial costs and impacts that the building and operating the SCMagLev will have on communities, counties, and the state of Maryland. For more information, go to the CATS Facebook page: [www.facebook.com/groups/citizensagainstscmaglev](https://www.facebook.com/groups/citizensagainstscmaglev), and the Stop This Train website at: [www.stopthistrain.org](http://www.stopthistrain.org).