

May 18, 2021

Secretary Gregory Slater
Maryland Department of Transportation
Maryland Transit Administration
Harry R. Hughes Department of Transportation Building
7201 Corporate Center Drive
Hanover, Maryland 21076
secretary@mdot.state.md.us

Mr. Amit Bose
Acting Administrator
Federal Railroad Administration
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590
Amit.Bose@dot.gov

RE: NO BUILD Option for the Superconducting Magnetic Levitation (SCMAGLEV) Project

Dear Secretary Slater and Acting Administrator Bose:

On behalf of the residents of Prince George's County, we are writing to express our deep concerns regarding the Superconducting Magnetic Levitation (SCMAGLEV) Project. The proposed alignments contained in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) would result in significant harm to established residential neighborhoods, parkland, recreational facilities and environmentally sensitive areas. The noise and vibration from the trains, as well as the daily truck traffic, dust and visual impacts of the associated maintenance facilities exacerbate the problems caused by the proposed alignments. Based on all of the concerns identified, and the comprehensive analysis of our regional planning agency, the Maryland-National Capital Park & Planning Commission (MNCPPC), we believe the "NO BUILD" option is the most appropriate option.

The SCMAGLEV project does not address any of the transportation priorities identified annually by Prince George's County during the Maryland Consolidated Transportation Program (CTP) process. As a renewed interest and investment in our transportation network is sorely needed, we strongly believe that the first priority should be a focus on maintenance, the state of good repair, and improvement of the region's existing infrastructure. To quote USDOT Secretary Pete Buttigieg on March 25, 2021, "Now is the time...to clear the backlog and repair our highways, roads, bridges, maritime ports and airports; to enhance freight and passenger rail and to provide accessible public transit and mobility options for all."

Although we believe that even more additional time was needed, we appreciate the extension of the public comment period for the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) to

May 24, 2021. A significant amount of time was needed to appropriately analyze the information contained within the document and allow all interested parties to fully express concerns which include severe noise, vibrations and immense damage to environmentally sensitive areas along the proposed alignment. We are also concerned about the considerable impact on residents and businesses during the construction process.

SCMAGLEV is an unnecessary and flawed project in many ways. Project advocates indicate a desire for SCMAGLEV to continue beyond the current study area of Washington, D.C. to Baltimore, further up the coast to New York and perhaps beyond. Currently, there is no indication that this desire is anything more than a wish. Even at its maximization, SCMAGLEV is little more than a very expensive novelty project that demonstrates little functional utility to anyone, and even less benefit to our jurisdiction. The SCMAGLEV Project, as proposed, will cut through Prince George's County, disrupting businesses, residents and taking land, while seriously damaging our environment—all without providing any meaningful benefit. The current alignments do not include a single stop in our jurisdiction. We will be subject to all of the potential negative impacts, without any opportunity for transit-oriented development, permanent jobs and amenities.

We believe the exorbitant costs anticipated to design and construct the SCMAGLEV Project would be better expended on conducting a comprehensive upgrade of the North East Corridor. USDOT has already made significant investments to upgrade some of the most heavily used sections of the Northeast Corridor rail system, including separating passenger and freight rail for faster Acela service, and station improvements like New Carrollton in Prince George's County and Union Station in the District of Columbia. Working together as a region we need to provide more options for the greatest number of users, with an emphasis on enhanced economic development throughout the region.

Some additional concerns that we share are as follows:

- The estimated cost of travel tickets is up to \$80 a trip. This is not a fare that the average commuter can or should absorb.
- The project will not remove local commuter traffic or address traffic congestion from the local road network.
- The SCMAGLEV project is not a “green” project. The technology has a high-power consumption rate with a potentially high climate impact.
- Recent developments of high-speed rail (HSR) technology have reduced the advantage of MAGLEV technology at higher speeds, so that the differences in travel times on typical interstation spacings would be small.
- High-speed rail (HSR) is cleaner, cheaper, and more compatible with existing rail networks.
- The damage that this project brings could have adverse environmental impacts on our communities for many years to come.

We strongly agree with Secretary Buttigieg and support federal investment in enhancing existing infrastructure rather than wasting funding on a mode of travel that ignores Prince

George's County's most central transportation priorities. We strongly urge your recommendation of the NO BUILD option.

We very much appreciate your full consideration of the concerns expressed and thank you in advance for your time and attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

Angela D. Alsobrooks
Prince George's County Executive

Calvin S. Hawkins, II, Chair
Prince George's County Council

Cc: Governor Lawrence J. Hogan, Jr.
Hon. Benjamin Cardin, U.S. Senate
Hon. Chris Van Hollen, U.S. Senate
Hon. Steny Hoyer, U.S. House of Representatives
Hon. Anthony G. Brown, U.S. House of Representatives
Elizabeth Hewlett, Chair, Prince George's County Planning Board, M-NCPPC
Tara H. Jackson, Chief Administrative Officer, Office of the County Executive
Mr. Brandon Bratcher, Federal Railroad Administration Office of Communications
Wayne Rogers, Chairman & CEO, Baltimore Washington Rapid Rail