



PRESS RELEASE

Contact:

Maryland Coalition for Responsible Transit

Email: mcrtaction@gmail.com

Website: <http://mcrt-action.org/>

Maryland Coalition for Responsible Transit Lauds U.S. Steel-Wheel, High-Speed Train Projects – BUT Denounces the Superconducting Magnetic Levitation Train Project

January 4, 2024, Maryland Coalition for Responsible Transit MD – On December 11, 2023, after a visit to Japan, U.S. Secretary of Transportation Pete Buttigieg announced several new U.S. high-speed train projects and championed the feasibility of the United States implementing the kind of rail infrastructure found in Japan.

Secretary Buttigieg touted delivering high-speed rail service in California’s Central Valley; creating a new high-speed rail corridor between Las Vegas, Nevada, and southern California; expanding and adding frequencies to the Pennsylvania Keystone Corridor in North Carolina north to connect Raleigh and Richmond, Virginia; investing in Chicago Union Station toward future improvements to the Midwest corridors hub; and improving service in Maine, Montana, and Alaska. The Maryland Coalition for Responsible Transit (MCRT) champions the responsible improvement offered by vetted commuter transportation systems in the United States and supports the advancement of high-speed rail transportation projects that in fact would serve commuters.

Secretary Buttigieg also referred to making major upgrades to existing conventional rail corridors to better connect Northern Virginia and the Southeast with the Northeast Corridor. We draw a distinction between the several steel-wheel, high-speed rail projects and the Superconducting Magnetic Levitation (SCMaglev) train project imagined for the Baltimore-Washington – District of Columbia – New York corridor. While the MCRT supports improvements such as the new tunnels in Baltimore and under the Hudson River, which will be used by trains serving local communities, as well as express trains between larger cities, high-speed rail references made by the Secretary should not be conflated to include the SCMaglev. The latter is not commuter or community centric, environmentally friendly, or capable of sustaining job-creating benefits as is the potential of the other projects. SCMaglev technology has many safety issues that need to be addressed before a decision is made to allow construction of the proposed Baltimore-Washington segment, including shielding from radiation, crashworthiness of the vehicles, vehicle vulnerability to leaving the guideway, and many other related issues.

Perhaps we should look to Japan for its further assessment of SCMaglev technology? The Central Japan Railway Company building the line from Tokyo to Nagoya (about 170 miles) has acknowledged that it is now unlikely to come into service in 2027 as scheduled. This would be the first line using the SCMaglev technology in revenue service. The present operation in rural Japan is only a test track not subject to the stress of high-density daily operation. The MCRT posits that the advent of the SCMaglev technology in the United States is not promising and would cause more harm than good.

Please contact us and go to our website for more information about our opposition to the SCMaglev.

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