



PRESS RELEASE

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Baltimore-Washington Rapid Rail Withdraws Its Application to the Maryland Department of the Environment for Tier II Water Quality Certification for the SCMaglev Train Project

February 7, 2024, Maryland Coalition for Responsible Transit MD – On December 27, 2023, Baltimore-Washington Rapid Rail (BWRR) withdrew its application to the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) for Tier II Water Quality Certification (WQC) for its Superconducting Magnetic Levitation (SCMaglev) train project, indicating they “intend to reapply when the project documents are detailed enough to address MDE’s comments.”

The Maryland Coalition for Responsible Transit (MCRT) and many other groups and individuals weighed in during the MDE comment period, which was extended through our successful write-in campaign. For more information, including recordings of the public hearings and the numerous comments submitted (zip files under WQC Request Correspondence), go to

<https://mde.maryland.gov/programs/water/WetlandsandWaterways/Pages/SCMAGLEV.aspx>.

The MDE described *BWRR’s application withdrawal* in its January 18, 2024, letter to the company:

After completing the required public process and reviewing the WQC request in accordance with regulatory requirements, the Department then received a letter from BWRR on December 27, 2023 withdrawing the WQC request for this project. The Department hereby acknowledges and accepts this withdrawal, which was solely initiated by BWRR. No further action is required to be taken on this request for Certification as it has thereby been withdrawn by the applicant, rendering any action by the state of Maryland as moot.

They further *emphasized*:

It is strongly recommended (although not required) that BWRR request a new Certification only after federal review of the project under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) resumes and there is more certainty around the preferred alignment and federal approvals, since a Certification decision is required due to discharges associated with the [US Army] Corps [of Engineers] permit application . . .

The MCRT will continue its efforts in opposition to the SCMaglev. As noted by Rich Dolesh of the Friends of Patuxent Research Refuge, one of the several volunteer experts who helped craft MCRT’s comments, our grassroots efforts and those of our partners are vital to review and monitor the process each step of the way.

[The MDE is] constituted to serve the public interest by granting water quality certification permits for such economic and transportation development projects as long as they fully meet requirements of law and regulation. I feel that MCRT and many other participating groups and individuals who have tracked this project and commented on its deficiencies have performed a valuable public service. While we believe that almost all of the arguments for this project that have been made by the sponsors are insufficient to justify building it, it will remain up to us to continue to be vigilant in ensuring that every requirement of Maryland and federal law and regulation is followed.

Go to MCRT’s website for more information and contact us about our opposition to the proposed SCMaglev train project.

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