



POSITION STATEMENT

TESTIMONY PRESENTED TO THE SENATE BUDGET AND TAXATION COMMITTEE

SENATE BILL 253 – STATE FINANCE AND PROCUREMENT – PROHIBITED APPROPRIATIONS – MAGNETIC LEVITATION TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM

February 5, 2019

DONALD C. FRY
PRESIDENT & CEO
GREATER BALTIMORE COMMITTEE

POSITION: Oppose

Senate Bill 253 would prohibit the State or any local jurisdiction from spending any public money on a magnetic levitation (Maglev) transportation system in the State. In addition, the bill also prevents a proposal for a Maglev system from including the use of Amtrak or CSX transportation right-of-way and precludes a public or private entity that receives money from the State from approving or permitting a Maglev system.

Senate Bill 253 is an attempt to make it more difficult or even impossible to achieve the goal of high-speed rail in the Northeast Corridor, particularly between Baltimore and Washington. Rather than taking steps to impede progress, the State should be removing barriers to progress. The GBC endorses the efforts of Baltimore Washington Rapid Rail (BWRR) to help resolve the long-recognized need for high speed in this corridor.

The Northeast Corridor encompasses a population of over 50 million people. Delays on our highways have tripled in the last 30 years. The Baltimore-Washington region now features 52 percent of the worst highway bottlenecks in the country and auto travel is expected to increase by 22 percent by 2040. The Baltimore Washington SCMAGLEV (superconducting magnetic levitation) project would connect two urban centers thereby reducing congestion and expanding opportunities for business growth.

Meanwhile, our railways are operating on more than 100-year-old infrastructure with alignments not suitable for high-speed travel. Freight and passenger rail share the same tracks. Approximately 75 percent of all weekday commuter rail ridership in the U.S. is on the Northeast Corridor. Rather than taking incremental steps to patch the existing system, it is time for an integrated bold approach to help solve our nation's transportation problems.

Maryland must encourage transportation and infrastructure like the Baltimore-Washington SCMAGLEV to usher the Northeast Corridor into the future and bring the region to the forefront of technology and transportation in the United States.

For the reasons stated above, the Greater Baltimore Committee urges an unfavorable report on Senate Bill 253.

The Greater Baltimore Committee (GBC) is a non-partisan, independent, regional business advocacy organization comprised of hundreds of businesses -- large, medium and small -- educational institutions, nonprofit organizations and foundations located in Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Carroll, Harford, and Howard counties as well as Baltimore City. The GBC is a 64-year-old, private-sector membership organization with a rich legacy of working with government to find solutions to problems that negatively affect our competitiveness and viability.

GREATER BALTIMORE COMMITTEE

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