

ALONZO T. WASHINGTON
Legislative District 22
Prince George's County

—
Vice Chair
Ways and Means Committee

—
Chair, Education Subcommittee



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THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

August 5th, 2021

U.S. Senator Ben Cardin
509 Hart Building
Washington, DC 20590

U.S. Senator Chris Van Hollen
110 Hart Building
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Senators Cardin and Van Hollen,

I am writing to express my strong opposition to the funding specifically included for magnetic levitation trains outlined in the Senate infrastructure legislation (page 763, lines 16-19). Not only should this language be removed, but there should be provisions included to prevent any federal funding from benefitting the Baltimore Washington Superconducting Magnetic Levitation (MAGLEV) train, which will have a significant negative impact on our community. For the past several years, my constituents in Maryland's 22nd District have been actively opposing this project.

In January 2021, the Federal Railroad Administration released its Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS), which shows how this project will affect residential areas in Prince George's County. This report can be accessed on the MAGLEV Project website – www.bwmaglev.info – which also includes links to previous reports released on the train. The DEIS shows many concerning aspects of the project that have alarmed District 22 residents.

This project cuts directly through Prince George's County Maryland, with the proposed route coming right through my District. I have several serious concerns with this project, including:

- The latest estimates show that this project will cost between \$13.8 billion and \$16.8 billion. What will this do to the other transportation needs of Prince George's County and the State of Maryland? Bridge, road, & highway repair are key priorities for District 22 residents, along with continuing to fund the MARC & AMTRAK trains.
- The MAGLEV is not affordable for our residents, and we already have viable alternatives. According to federal analysis, the expected average fare would be \$60 for a one-way trip, and could go as high as \$80. Amtrak's Acela, which makes the trip between

Washington and Baltimore in 32 minutes, costs about \$46 one-way. The hour-long ride aboard a MARC commuter train costs \$8.

- There is strong concern about the use of eminent domain in relation to this project. What options are there for citizens to protect their property and life investments? How will the Government determine “fair market value” when taking people’s homes?
- What will the Federal Government do to ensure that property values are unaffected? Years of intense construction, followed by disruptive vibrations from an underground train right under residents’ homes will only drive home prices down.
- The construction of such a large project would disrupt the environment and pose a real threat to the green space in our County. Northeast MAGLEV claims that this is a “green project,” but this mostly just addresses carbon emissions. What about the local environmental impacts on the Chesapeake Bay and other areas?
- Lastly, there is little to no benefit of the project for Prince George’s County – as the only planned train stops are in Washington, DC, at BWI-Marshall airport, and in Baltimore City. Our residents will be forced to deal with every aspect of MAGLEV construction, while reaping none of the supposed “benefits” offered by this project.

Over my past nine years as a State Delegate for District 22, I have been contacted thousands of times by residents who have repeatedly shared the same concerns outlined in this letter. Building the MAGLEV will only function to benefit wealthy lobbyists and developers who live in Washington DC, while leaving the residents of Prince George’s County to deal with the environmental and economic impact.

Senators, on behalf of myself and thousands of Prince George’s and Maryland residents, I implore you to remove this funding from the legislation to protect our vulnerable communities.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Alonzo T. Washington'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Alonzo T. Washington
Maryland State Delegate