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**Committee: Environment and Transportation**  
**Testimony on: HB 710 – “Equitable and Inclusive Transit-Oriented Development Enhancement Act”**  
**Position: Favorable**  
**Hearing Date: February 17, 2022**

The Maryland Chapter of the Sierra Club supports HB 710 that would expand the More Jobs for Marylanders Program to provide tax credits and benefits to businesses that create new jobs in areas designated for transit-oriented development (TOD), just as it now provides tax credits and benefits to businesses that create jobs in areas designated as opportunity zones.

The bill also would create a special, non-lapsing Transit-Oriented Development Capital Grant and Revolving Loan Fund that would be administered by the Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) to promote equitable and inclusive TOD throughout the state. The Fund would receive an annual appropriation from the State sufficient to ensure it had a balance of at least \$10 million at the start of each fiscal year.

The Fund would provide financial assistance to local jurisdictions for TOD that meets equity goals established by MDOT. For jurisdictions to obtain financial assistance, their project(s) would need to enhance access to transit for low-income and minority residents of the jurisdiction, enhance access to transit in areas with affordable housing and a diversity of job and educational opportunities, or encourage development around underdeveloped and underutilized transit stations.

Transportation is the largest source of climate-disrupting greenhouse gases in Maryland and our nation today. Tailpipe emissions from vehicles also are hazardous to human health, and are linked to cancers, heart disease, asthma, emphysema, and other respiratory diseases. Promoting increased development throughout the state within a half mile of transit stations would encourage greater use of transit versus cars, increase revenue for transit, dramatically lessen the need to own a car, decrease sprawl, promote more walking, and make effective use of land by creating more housing, employment opportunities, and sustainable economic development.

Providing small, competitive grants and loans to support TOD planning and construction in an equitable manner, together with expanded incentives to create jobs and housing near transit, could accelerate TOD around Maryland’s transit stations. This would be good for the environment, public health, the state’s economy, and the general well-being of Maryland residents and communities. We urge a favorable report on this bill.

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Founded in 1892, the Sierra Club is America’s oldest and largest grassroots environmental organization. The Maryland Chapter has over 70,000 members and supporters, and the Sierra Club nationwide has over 800,000 members and nearly four million supporters.