



July 1, 2021

Mr. Pete Buttigieg
Secretary of Transportation
U.S. Department of Transportation 1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

Re: Montgomery County, Maryland RAISE Grant Application

Dear Secretary Buttigieg,

Sierra Club Montgomery County Maryland Group's strongly supports the Montgomery County Maryland Department of Transportation's application regarding the Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) discretionary grant program for a new green hydrogen production site and 13 zero-emission hydrogen-electric buses for the Great Seneca Transit Network.

The climate crisis is the challenge of our lifetime and Maryland must be a leader in the efforts to reduce pollution and create a healthier, more equitable, and thriving clean energy economy.

The use of hydrogen-electric technology will be the first public transit application on the East Coast, providing clean, efficient, frequent, and reliable service. Hydrogen gas will be produced by electrolysis, a process that separates hydrogen from water and does not involve releasing harmful methane. The 13 hydrogen-electric buses will support the first phase of the Great Seneca Transit Network. The new network will serve and support growth in the life sciences, medical, and educational institutions in Rockville and Gaithersburg. The first phase includes two routes that link the burgeoning life sciences cluster in this area with the WMATA Red Line and other transit services at Shady Grove Station, facilitating the desired growth of this critical industry. The GSTN will reduce carbon pollution by connecting areas to public transit and enhancing equity by connecting underserved communities to healthcare, education and jobs.



Transportation currently accounts for approximately 38% of all greenhouse gas emissions in Maryland, making it the number one source of climate pollution in the state. Tailpipe pollution causes asthma, cardiovascular diseases, and even premature death, and communities of color are disproportionately impacted. Furthermore, low-income households spend up to 30% of their **income on transportation costs**, and people of color on average have **longer commute times**.

Cutting emissions from fossil fuel powered vehicles is a crucial step toward protecting the health of communities, saving families money, and improving access to jobs and services. This project is an important and needed investment in our community. It will create high-quality jobs, protect our environment, and generate equitable economic opportunity.

We appreciate your consideration of this application and request your support of this important project.

Sincerely,

Shruti Bhatnagar, Chair
Sierra Club Montgomery County, MD
Shruti.bhatnagar@msierra.org
240-498-3459

Tina Slater, Transportation Lead
Sierra Club Montgomery County, MD
slater.tina@gmail.com
(240) 687-1343