

High Speed Rail Project Proposed to Cut Through Prince George's and Anne Arundel Counties

A high speed train technology called SCMaglev (super-conducting magnetic levitation) has been proposed between Washington D.C. and Baltimore. Several of the routes being studied go right through our communities. Homes, businesses, churches, schools, green space, habitat and historic properties along the proposed routes are at a risk. Properties in the direct path of the tracks could be seized by eminent domain and surrounding properties would inevitably suffer a loss of value. The commercial viability of this technology has not been proven anywhere in the world and the price tag for construction alone is at least \$10 billion, with similar projects overrunning their original budgets.

There has been occasional talk of high speed rail in our region for years, but this project has cleared several serious hurdles. A \$27.8 million dollar Environmental Impact Study is currently underway and according to the Maryland Department of Transportation's current schedule, the Final Environmental Impact Statement and Record of Decision are expected in late winter 2019. The Japanese government has already committed \$5 billion dollars of the \$10 billion needed to fund construction. Infrastructure development is currently a bipartisan issue in DC. With money already committed and a political environment ripe for a project like this, it could actually happen.

The benefits that proponents claim the project will deliver are questionable. Stops will only be in DC, BWI Airport and Baltimore. The project developer has stated that fares will be on par with Acela prices (\$50-75 one way), which is not affordable for the average commuter. Proponents claim that it will take cars off the road, reducing regional congestion and greenhouse gas emissions. This is countered by research that shows it is difficult to divert intercity automobile traffic to trains in corridors with average trips less than 150 miles¹. Proponents regularly describe the project as eventually extending to New York City and/or Boston. However, no states have committed to building such a line. Starting construction prior to a regional buy-in is ill conceived.

SCMaglev technology is just one type of high speed rail technology, and it has not been proven viable in a commercially operational system anywhere in the world. Japan opened a test track in 1997, but its first commercial-scale SCMaglev train line is not expected to begin operations until 2027². The test track is only open to the public for about 40 days a year, according to a 2017 CNBC report, making the train more of a tourist destination than a functional transportation system³.

Visit www.StopThisTrain.org or Join the Facebook Group: Citizens Against SCMaglev to learn more and get involved in the fight to stop this train!

¹ U.S. Department of Transportation Federal Railroad Administration. (1997). High-speed ground transportation for America: CFS report to Congress. [<https://www.fra.dot.gov/eLib/details/L02519>]

² Hidekazu, A., & Nobuo, K. (2017). End game for Japan's construction state - The Linear (maglev) Shinkansen and Abenomics. *The Asia-Pacific Journal Japan Focus*, 15. Retrieved from <http://www.apjif.org>

³ Fujita, J. (2007, April 19). What it's like to hold Japan's super train golden ticket. *CNBC*. Retrieved from <http://www.cnbc.com>

