Baltimore-Washington SCMaglev is Bad for Maryland

This train is only for elite travelers. Project developer Baltimore-Washington Rapid Rail has stated that fares will be on par with Acela prices ($50-75 one way).

It will not cut down on regional auto traffic. Research has shown that it is difficult to divert intercity automobile traffic to trains in corridors with average trips less than 150 miles [1]. Additionally, a 2012 Congressional Research Service report on high speed rail argued people traveling for leisure are likely to be more price sensitive than business passengers and fare cost will be a big determiner in whether travelers choose the train [2]. With stops only in Washington, DC, BWI, and Baltimore, it will not serve intra-regional traffic which makes up the vast majority of auto trips in the region. Ticket prices for the SCMaglev train are unlikely to get people out of their cars or pull them from the existing more affordable transit options.

It will not reduce congestion and greenhouse gas emissions. It defies logic that enough drivers would choose to regularly ride the SCMaglev train between Baltimore, BWI Airport, and Washington, D.C. to justify the argument that this project will reduce congestion and greenhouse gas emissions in our region. Fare costs would eliminate the average commuter or leisure traveler and the limited number of stops reduces the utility of the train.

SCMaglev Technology Has Not Been Proven to Be Commercially Viable. 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 2027 [3].

No Other States Have Committed to Extending this Line to the north. Project proponents regularly describe this project as eventually extending to New York City and/or Boston at a cost that has been reported as reaching $100 billion[4]. However, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and New York have not committed to building such a line. In addition Connecticut and Rhode Island have blocked construction of high-speed rail on new alignments through those states creating a major obstacle to building a SCMaglev line to Boston. It is foolish to spend $10 billion on the Baltimore-Washington, D.C. line, which will offer minimal benefit to citizens, based on what may turn out to be a pipe dream.

A Plan for New Rail Infrastructure in the Northeast Corridor (NEC) is Already Underway. This plan does not include building an SCMaglev train and in fact, this project would directly compete with its recommendations. The Federal Railroad Administration, through the NEC FUTURE program has already developed a long-term vision and investment program for the NEC with regional stakeholders. Billions of dollars have already been committed and major upgrades to the existing Acela equipment are expected by 2022.

It will hurt Maryland Communities. Several of the routes being studied go right through our communities. Homes, businesses, churches, green space, habitat and historic structures along the proposed routes are at a risk. Loss of property, property value, tax revenue, and recreation space will hurt our region. Not to mention the economic implications if this train fails to generate enough revenue to cover its operation and maintenance costs and taxpayers are left to subsidize it.

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!

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[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] Peterman, D.R., Frittelli, J., & Mallett, W.J. (2013) The development of high speed rail in the United States: Issues and recent events. Congressional Research Service

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

[4] Fugita, A. (2017, April 19). What it's like to hold Japan's super train golden ticket. CNBC. Retrieved from http://www.cnbc.com