

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

October 28, 2020

The Honorable Larry Hogan
Governor
State of Maryland
100 State Circle
Annapolis, MD 21401

Dear Governor Hogan:

We are writing today to express our deep concern about the future of the Purple Line project. There have been very troubling developments since we were briefed by the Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) Secretary Greg Slater in July. Now that it is clear that the Purple Line Transit Partners (PLTP) intend to leave the project and began to demobilize and secure the construction sites prior to the current forbearance agreement, our concerns about the fate of the project have grown exponentially.

Given the importance and size of this project, we urge you to use this time to negotiate with PLTP and, at the same time, continue making the necessary arrangements to transition the project to MDOT if a settlement is not reached. It is imperative to find a path forward as these delays mean that Maryland residents are the ones that suffer. Their needs must come first and foremost given that the mission of this public-private partnership was to save taxpayers money while addressing their growing commuting needs and improving local air quality by reducing cars on the road with improved transit options.

As you know, the Maryland Congressional Delegation fought hard in the early 2000s to have this project designated as a New Start by the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) under the Capital Investment Grant Program and has since led the effort to obtain the Full Funding Grant Agreement that allowed this project to move forward. That included obtaining \$900 million in federal funding. In light of the substantial commitment of federal resources and time to this project, we are concerned that the current situation could negatively impact Maryland's working relationship with FTA and harm Maryland's ability to access future federal transportation funds.

Since construction began three years ago, in September 2017, the project has caused significant disruption to the communities located near the alignment. Any additional delay in the completion of the project will only exacerbate the burdens being experienced by both residential communities and commercial enterprises situated in close proximity to the construction sites.

We are confident that, once completed, the Purple Line will be a great benefit to workers, families and the economies of Prince George's and Montgomery Counties and will reduce traffic congestion along that corridor. Once construction is complete, the project will connect residents to existing jobs and encourage development of new job centers. Attracting new investment along the corridor is a key benefit to the local communities. We are all anxious for the project to reach that stage as quickly and cost-effectively as possible.

Now that MDOT has taken over the day-to-day management of the project, we are requesting your response to the following questions:

- How do you plan to engage directly to get this project back on track and avoid losing the level of federal, local, and state resources committed to it and to the public-private partnership in place?
- Has your Administration communicated with the relevant federal agencies about the committed resources, including but not limited to the relevant TIFIA loan and Full Funding Grant Agreement funds, and how further delays may impact access to those resources? If so, what was the response from those federal agencies?
- How many of the existing subcontracts has the State assumed from PLTP? What percentage is that of the total number of contracts, both in terms of the number of contracts and the dollar value of those contracts? Additionally, what is MDOT's current capacity for being able to assume these contracts, and what is MDOT doing to ramp-up internal capacity to manage these contracts? When will MDOT have adequate internal capacity to manage the entire project?
- What is MDOT's plan to retain, rehire or hire local, Maryland-based, and minority subcontractors?
- How will these developments impact the overall cost of the project?
- How will these developments impact the expected completion date of the project?
- What are the financial impacts to the State as a result of taking over the project? Do you expect other transportation projects to be negatively impacted as a result? If so, which ones?
- What lessons do the challenges with the Purple Line project provide regarding the use of public-private partnerships, and how will these lessons inform any use of this approach for other projects in Maryland going forward?

We look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,



Chris Van Hollen
United States Senator



Benjamin L. Cardin
United States Senator

/s/

Steny H. Hoyer
Member of Congress

/s/

C.A. Dutch Ruppersberger
Member of Congress

/s/

John P. Sarbanes
Member of Congress

/s/

Kweisi Mfume
Member of Congress

/s/

Anthony Brown
Member of Congress

/s/

Jamie Raskin
Member of Congress

/s/

David Trone
Member of Congress