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Community March for the Completion of the Red Line Light Rail leads to the doors of the MTA

Baltimore, MD, February 21, 2024- The Baltimore Transit Equity Coalition (BTEC), CASA, Climate Communications Coalition, and other community organizations rallied downtown and marched to the MTA yesterday, to build pressure on the administration to complete the Red Line as 100% Light Rail Transit project (LRT). An [open letter to Governor Moore](#) demands that he take this challenge head-on and order an end to delays. Demonstrators urged the governor to take the necessary steps to create a safe and reliable transit system that will allow all families to thrive and repair historical inequities that continue to segregate communities, undermining their potential.

Minister Glenn Smith, Vice President of BTEC and President of the Reconnecting Communities in West Baltimore Coalition, spoke about the devastating impacts of the “Highway to Nowhere (HTN) which destroyed once thriving neighborhoods. The Red Line’s LRT completion would finally heal the damage caused by the HTN. “The Red Line LRT is more than a convenience: it’s a way to generate jobs, economic mobility, and bring opportunity to those who were left behind by the HTN,” stated Smith. Dilahila Castellanos, a climate educator at CASA, related her personal frustrations using the transit system such as the disproportionate time it takes to get to work using bus when one cannot afford a car. This lack of LRT leaves little time for family or leisure. Castellanos’ experience also put a spotlight on the dangers of waiting at poorly lit bus-stops at night.

Kwane Wyatt, program director of Analysis and Engagement at the Fund for Education Excellence, spoke on behalf of students his organization supports. The “Not In Service Campaign” denounces the unreliable bus system that causes students to be late, miss breakfast and valuable class time which affects their grades and impacts their future. “Can students really be expected to excel when they get to school late and are hungry, at no fault of their own? Can they be blamed for failing exams during the first hours of a school day, when they cannot be present?” asked Wyatt. Ashley Holmes, Youth Ambassador for BTEC and current student at Baltimore City College High School underlined the negative effects of the unreliable bus system: “I left for school at 4 AM and 5 AM and still arrived late. You’re either 3 hours early or 3 hours late. Buses are not reliable!”

Samuel Jordan, president of BTEC, proposed the Escape Velocity Revenue Generation (EVRG) strategy to escape the fiscal crisis that threatens the Red Line LRT. “By entering the General Obligation Bond market, we can expand access to capital and incentivize private investment through a Fund that would allow the completion of important transit projects, primarily, the Red Line LRT.”

Transit is an intersectional issue for addressing systemic inequities. Education, economics and environment are impacted by a functional, reliable, safe, and clean transit system. “We deserve a transit system that will address these issues and allow our communities to thrive.” Stated Cynthia Shaw, president of the Lyndhurst Community Association. ###