


F R O M	NAME & TITLE	Michelle Pourciau, Director	CITY of BALTIMORE M E M O	
	AGENCY NAME & ADDRESS	Department of Transportation (DOT) 417 E Fayette Street, Room 527		
	SUBJECT	City Council Bill 17-0023R		

TO The Honorable President and
Members of the City Council
c/o Natawna Austin
Room 400 City Hall

December 22, 2017

I am herein reporting on City Council Bill 17-0023R - Resolution - Informational Hearing - Proposed Replacement of the Baltimore & Potomac Tunnel For the purpose of requesting that representatives from the Federal Railroad Administration, Amtrak, and the Maryland and City Departments of Transportation appear before the City Council to discuss the proposed B&P tunnel replacement project and what its costs and benefits will be for both Baltimore as a whole and the neighborhoods that are being asked to host the project.

DOT supports this bill and respectfully requests a favorable report.

Respectfully,



Michelle Pourciau
Director

MP/lw

Cc: Kyron Banks, Mayor's Office

**CITY OF BALTIMORE
COUNCIL BILL 17-0023R
(Resolution)**

Introduced by: Councilmembers Pinkett, Dorsey, Costello, Bullock, Henry, Middleton, Cohen,
Burnett, Sneed, Schleifer, Reisinger, Scott, Stokes, President Young

Introduced and read first time: May 8, 2017

Assigned to: Land Use and Transportation Committee

REFERRED TO THE FOLLOWING AGENCIES: Department of Transportation

A RESOLUTION ENTITLED

1 A COUNCIL RESOLUTION concerning

2 **Informational Hearing – Proposed Replacement of the Baltimore & Potomac Tunnel**

3 FOR the purpose of requesting that representatives from the Federal Railroad Administration,
4 Amtrak, and the Maryland and City Departments of Transportation appear before the City
5 Council to discuss the proposed B&P tunnel replacement project and what its costs and
6 benefits will be for both Baltimore as a whole and the neighborhoods that are being asked to
7 host the project.

8 **Recitals**

9 The 144-year-old Baltimore and Potomac (B&P) Tunnel in West Baltimore, located between
10 the West Baltimore MARC Station and Penn Station along Amtrak's busy Northeast Corridor is
11 used by Amtrak and MARC passenger trains, as well as some Norfolk Southern Railway freight
12 trains. According to the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA), this nearly century and half old
13 tunnel requires substantial maintenance and repairs, does not meet current design standards, and
14 is approaching the end of its useful life with regard to its physical condition. The FRA has also
15 determined that the tunnel is functionally obsolete, unable to meet current and future rail
16 demands due to its vertical and horizontal track alignment while serving as a bottleneck at a
17 critical point in the Northeast Corridor, impairing operations of the most heavily-traveled rail line
18 in the United States

19 After years of studies on the issue, the FRA recently announced its preferred option for
20 replacing the tunnel with 3.67 miles of new track including a new 2 mile tunnel through West
21 Baltimore. The FRA proposal, projected to cost \$4.5 billion, would double both the number of
22 trains that could pass along the track in a day and the speeds they could sustain.

23 However, the project would require Amtrak to acquire 12 acres of land, displacing at least 17
24 residents and 6 businesses. Concerns have also been raised about the siting of a ventilation
25 facility on North Avenue and the impact of construction and travel vibrations on the affected
26 neighborhoods.

27 Also, although billed as a passenger rail project, the current tunnel does handle some freight
28 traffic. It is not presently clear whether the increased capacity on the proposed rail line would
29 result in an increase in freight traffic as well, or if the nature of that traffic might change in a way
30 that could raise health and safety concerns for Baltimore residents.

EXPLANATION: Underlining indicates matter added by amendment.
~~Strike-out~~ indicates matter deleted by amendment.