Draft Environmental Impact Statement and Draft Section 4(f) Evaluation

BALTIMORE-WASHINGTON SUPERCONDUCTING MAGLEV PROJECT

January 2021

U.S. Department of Transportation
Federal Railroad Administration

MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Baltimore-Washington Superconducting MAGLEV Project

Draft Environmental Impact Statement and Draft Section 4(f) Evaluation

Prepared by:

US Department of Transportation – Federal Railroad Administration and Maryland Department of Transportation

With Cooperating Agencies:

Federal Aviation Administration (FAA)
Federal Transit Administration (FTA)
National Capital Planning Commission (NCPC)
U.S. Department of Interior (USDOI)-National Park Service (NPS)
Surface Transportation Board (STB)
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE)
U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA)–Beltsville Agricultural Research Center (BARC)
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA)
National Aeronautics and Space Administration, Goddard Space Flight Center (NASA/GSFC)
National Security Agency (NSA)
U.S. Department of Interior (USDOI)-U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS)

Submitted Pursuant To:

National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA) (42 U.S.C. § 4321 et seq.) and the Council on Environmental Quality Implementing Regulations for NEPA (40 CFR Parts 1500-1508);
Federal Railroad Administration Procedures for Considering Environmental Impacts (64 FR 28545, May 26, 1999, as updated by 78 FR 2713, January 14, 2013);
Efficient Environmental Reviews for Project Decision making (23 U.S.C. § 139);
Section 4(f) of the United States Department of Transportation Act of 1966 (49 U.S.C. § 303);
Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) of 1966 (54 U.S.C. § 306101);
the Clean Air Act of 1970, as amended (42 U.S.C. § 7401 et seq.);
the Clean Water Act of 1972 (33 U.S.C. § 1251-1387); and the
Endangered Species Act of 1973 (16 U.S.C. § 1531-1544).

Paul Nissenbaum
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January 13, 2021
Date of Approval

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The Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) and Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) have prepared this Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) to document the evaluation of the potential beneficial and adverse environmental impacts of the Superconducting Magnetic Levitation (SCMAGLEV) Project. The Project Sponsor, Baltimore Washington Rapid Rail, LLC proposes to construct and operate an SCMAGLEV system between Baltimore, MD and Washington, D.C. The SCMAGLEV Project is a high-speed rail technology that runs on a grade-separated, fixed guideway powered by magnetic forces at speeds of over 300 miles per hour. This system does not operate on standard steel wheel railroad tracks and therefore requires a dedicated grade-separated guideway.

The SCMAGLEV Project includes two terminal stations (Washington, D.C., and Baltimore, MD) and one intermediate station at the Baltimore-Washington International Thurgood Marshall Airport (BWI Marshall Airport Station). The system requires additional facilities to operate including one trainset maintenance facility (TMF), two maintenance of way (MOW) facilities, and various smaller ancillary facilities. The ancillary facilities include fresh air and emergency egress (FA/EE) facilities, substations, SCMAGLEV wayside system facilities and stormwater management. The system proposes to operate on both underground (deep tunnel) and an elevated guideway (viaduct). Stations and ancillary facilities are generally above, below, or adjacent to the guideway and would provide for access to passenger and employee parking as applicable.

The purpose of the SCMAGLEV Project is to evaluate, and ultimately construct and operate, a safe, revenue-producing, high-speed ground transportation system that achieves the optimum operating speed of the SCMAGLEV technology to significantly reduce travel time to meet the capacity and ridership needs of the Baltimore-Washington region.

FRA may provide Federal funding for construction of the SCMAGLEV Project or take regulatory action, including issuing a Rule of Particular Applicability, to ensure the proposed system is operated safely. Either of these actions (funding or regulatory) constitutes a major federal action and triggers environmental review under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).

This DEIS documents the evaluation of the reasonably foreseeable potential beneficial and adverse environmental impacts of implementing the proposed SCMAGLEV system, including a No Build Alternative and twelve Build Alternatives between Washington D.C., and Baltimore, MD. Measures being considered by FRA and MDOT to avoid, minimize, or mitigate the potential adverse impacts of the twelve Build Alternatives are described. This document provides a comparative analysis between the No Build Alternative and the Build Alternatives. The Preferred Alternative will be identified in the Final Environmental Impact Statement. FRA has also prepared a Draft Section 4(f) Evaluation for the SCMAGLEV Project in compliance with Section 4(f) of the United States Department of Transportation Act of 1966, and a Draft Programmatic Agreement in accordance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act.

FRA is seeking input from the public on the DEIS, Draft Section 4(f) Evaluation, and Draft Programmatic Agreement, which are being made available to the public in accordance with NEPA and NHPA, and are available at the Project website: https://www.bwmaglev.info/index.php.

For the most up to date information visit www.bwmaglev.info. If additional assistance is required to review the DEIS, please send an email to info@bwmaglev.info.

The 90-day comment period for the DEIS starts on **January 22, 2021**. Comments on the DEIS can be submitted by email to info@bwmaglev.info, or through the online comment form at www.bwmaglev.info. Comments must be sent no later than **April 22, 2021**. FRA strongly encourages the submission of comments via email or through the online comment form and will consider all comments received during the comment period. For the most up to date information, sign up to join the project mailing list and visit www.bwmaglev.info.

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