

Ajay Bhatt's remarks September 4, 2017 12pm Elm Street Park

It is very encouraging to see everyone here today and at the same time infuriating because we were only told of the trail's closing with less than a week's notice.

The gross disregard of the communities' input throughout the project been a constant, but we must admit that we are shocked by this latest set of actions.

But we encouraged by supporters like you, 1600 supporters who over a holiday weekend immediately signed our change.org petition to Governor Hogan and shared their love of the Trail and outrage over wasteful and mismanaged Purple Line in their comments.

We are also encouraged have a legal team that has spent their entire careers being on the right side of environmental issues. And we all are on the right side of this one.

We want better ways for people get around the region Prince Georges and Montgomery Counties. We all struggle with a public transit system that is in constant need of repair, that sorely needs upgrades - Unfortunately our politicians are trying to get around the truly important transit issues by INSTEAD pointing to a \$6B shiny new train.

This \$6 billion, causing the largest debt increase in MD History, for a transit system that less than 1% of the State will ride,

The County and the State have made a poor deal for the themselves and now its a poor deal for all the communities throughout the entire state.

All this debt for what, a boondoggle that doesn't take cars off the road, and robs scarce resources away from our priorities like Metro

We encourage you to visit savethetrail.org and read our 8 reasons not to fund the PL.

Our lawsuit asks basic common sense cost-benefit analysis questions, simple questions about ridership, noise, water and air pollution and forces accountability for our scarce transportation dollars and forces accountability for abiding by our environmental laws put into place to protect our children, our air and our water.

This Purple Line reads like the cliché story from a movie about greedy developers, crooked politicians and the potential loss of a beloved park. How do we clear our heads? We hit the Trail.

We love the outdoors, we cherish moments walking, running and biking on the Trail. We walk our dogs on the trail and we meet friends on the trail and raise our children on the Trail. We use the trail to loop into Georgetown, to Rock Creek Park under the cool shaded Trail canopy.

The Trail is part of the fabric of not only of the surrounding communities but of the entire region.

If the Trail's closure is not halted, tomorrow students will return for their first day of school only to find their access cut off without a safe alternative, as will commuters, walkers, wounded warriors and other users of the Trail and

The story is the same all along the path of the Purple Line, affecting students, residents, commuters, small businesses, and the environment.

The 48 acres of forest marked for immediate clear-cutting harbor owls, woodpeckers and migratory songbirds and protect our streams and air quality.

A hold on the Trail closure will prevent irreparable harm and allow for the legal process to come to a just conclusion

A pause on the Purple Line will give MTA the time it takes to fulfill its commitments to plan safe alternatives for Trail users and for all communities along the Purple Line.

Please sign our petition on SaveTheTrail.org share it on Facebook, tweet it share it on your school and community listserves.

Governor Hogan needs to hear from all of us that Maryland needs a Pause on the Purple Line until the Court makes a final decision.

I am grateful to be standing next to an indefatigable environmental attorney, a man that has made impacts around the world with his environmentalism and who has dedicated his time these past several years to saving the trail -John Fitzgerald