

# News Release

## Board of Public Works Approves \$841 Million in Project Funding, Including Purple Line

### *Comptroller Brooke Lierman Votes Against Renewal of Contract for Troubled Company YesCare*

**ANNAPOLIS, Md. (March 13, 2024)** — The Maryland Board of Public Works (BPW) today approved more than \$841 million for 90 initiatives and projects across Maryland.

The BPW, which is comprised of chair, **Governor Wes Moore**, **Comptroller Brooke E. Lierman**, and **Treasurer Dereck Davis** approved a settlement of \$9.4 million to resolve all claims related to the United States Department of Labor investigation into time-keeping practices in the Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services (DPSCS) for corrections employees.

The settlement seeks to remedy egregious instances of wage theft from state employees during the Hogan administration. On July 5, 2023, the BPW approved a \$13 million settlement to resolve claims for 3,874 employees related to the original investigation.

Comptroller Lierman thanked AFSCME Maryland for their collaboration and partnership as the agency works to ensure that all affected employees receive their due wages. The BPW also approved a modification for the long-running Purple Line construction project, which increases the agreement by more than \$415 million and extends the terms through December 2057, a delay of more than four years. The cost of the now \$9.8 billion contract and public-private partnership (P3) agreement includes construction costs as well as debt repayment and 30 years of operations and maintenance.

During the meeting, Comptroller Lierman highlighted her concerns about the Purple Line and the modification and stressed the need to increase Disadvantaged Business Enterprise participation in the project.

“I hope that the challenges of this transportation P3, arguably the worst transit P3 in the nation as negotiated by the Hogan-Rahn MDOT demonstrate the folly of relying on P3 models for long-term projects,” Comptroller Lierman said. “Everyone is bearing

the consequences of the past administration. I don't enjoy voting yes on this, but we have to ensure we meet our obligations to riders in the state of Maryland through completing the Purple Line project.”

In response to questions from Comptroller Lierman, MTA Administrator Holly Arnold committed to not diverting funding from planned projects around the state to the Purple Line Project. Comptroller Lierman stressed the importance of preserving a commitment to projects listed in the Consolidated Transportation Program, like bus rapid transit and providing equitable transit funding and access throughout the state.

Additionally, BPW approved the modification extending the contract for Texas-based YesCare, which provides medical care for incarcerated individuals in the custody of the DPSCS. The vote was 2-1 with Comptroller Lierman voting against the proposal. Comptroller Lierman expressed her concerns about YesCare’s financial state as well as the company’s history of medical malpractice lawsuits. “I know that we all believe that the state of Maryland should only be doing business with vendors who provide the highest levels of care and services and don't use corporate loopholes to evade their responsibilities. I do not believe Yes Care is a contractor who aligns with our values and deserves a unanimous vote from the board of public works,” Comptroller Lierman declared before casting her no vote. Comptroller Lierman added that she looked forward to reviewing the new procurement for a health care provider for those in state-custody.

The next BPW meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, April 3, 2024.

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