



Montgomery County's Advocates for Better Transportation

Testimony in Support of SB 136

Testimony to Senate Budget & Taxation Committee,

February 5, 2020

The Action Committee for Transit strongly supports SB 136 and urges a favorable report.

At this moment, bus riders throughout the Washington area face cuts in needed service as a result of the 3% cap on local contributions to the WMATA operating budget. Marylanders will lose buses they depend on to get to work, to school, to doctors and hospitals, and for trips of all kinds.

This arbitrary cap fails to recognize that many actions by Maryland state and local governments raise WMATA's costs and reduce its revenues. Buses move slower when police allow Uber and Lyft vehicles to block bus traffic. Highway designs make walking to the bus stop dangerous and inconvenient. Traffic lights are timed to make 60 bus passengers wait while a single driver goes first. Bus-only lanes are much too rare, and the few that exist are poorly enforced. Restrictive zoning blocks transit-oriented development that would generate fare revenue for Metrobus and Metrorail.

Instead of cutting bus service, which only further penalizes the victims, we should attack the causes of rising WMATA costs by changing these harmful policies. The 3% cap on the state contribution to WMATA's operating budget is the wrong solution. Maryland needs more transit service, not less.