

BaltimoreCounty_FWA_HB1507.pdf

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Position: FWA

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BILL NO.: **HB 1507**

TITLE: **Transportation – Change in Bus Service – Impacts Report**

SPONSOR: **Delegate Addison**

COMMITTEE: **Environment and Transportation**

POSITION: **SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENTS**

DATE: **March 30, 2024**

Baltimore County **SUPPORTS WITH AMENDMENTS** House Bill 1507 – Transportation – Change in Bus Service – Impacts Report. This legislation would require the Maryland Transportation Authority to compile and publish a report on the impact of the cancellation or reduction in service, before the cancellation or reduction in service on any bus route. The MTA would additionally be responsible for distributing the report and holding public hearings on the report.

Baltimore County supports this bill because it would notify local communities of any adverse effect in changes to MTA’s bus service. This is especially important as the State and Baltimore County enters a challenging budgetary season. By notifying the families who depend on these transit services of impending changes early, they can better prepare and Baltimore County can work to mitigate the burden on our residents. Baltimore County would encourage the sponsor to add local governments to the report’s distribution under section 7-508 (C) (II) of this legislation because changes in MTA’s service can adversely effect both the County’s circulator, the Towson Loop, and rideshare services such as CountyRide.

Accordingly, Baltimore County urges a **FAVORABLE WITH AMENDMENTS** report on HB 1507 from the House Environment and Transportation Committee. For more information, please contact Jenn Aiosa, Director of Government Affairs at jaiosa@baltimorecountymd.gov.

DRM-Testimony-HB1507-SB70-FAV- Final 03.18.24 GR W

Uploaded by: Gabriel Rubinstein

Position: FWA

House Environment and Transportation Committee
House Bill 1507: Transportation - Change in Bus Service - Impacts Report
Date: March 20, 2024

Position: Support (with Amendment)

Thank you to the Committee Chair, Vice Chair, and members of the committee for the opportunity to provide testimony. My name is Gabriel Rubinstein and I am an attorney with Disability Rights Maryland, the protection and advocacy organization for Maryland. DRM's mission is to advocate for the legal rights of people with disabilities throughout the state. One of the mandated purposes of DRM's legal work is to ensure that people with disabilities are included in their communities.

House Bill 1507 increases the transparency of agency decisions, and facilitates engagement and oversight from the community. We believe this is an important bill that requires some amendments. Community integration requires public transportation systems that are equally reliable, effective, and accessible to people with disabilities. To be most effective, we believe this bill should also apply the same changes to paratransit service. Paratransit service is federally mandated Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) service that operates within $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile of fixed route services (metro/light rail/local bus). Our requested amendments are as follows:

On page 1, in line 19, strike "**SECTION**" and substitute "**SUBSECTION**"; and in the same line, after "**LINE**" insert , "**OR THE CORRESPONDING PARATRANSIT SERVICE AREA**".

On page 2, in line 9, strike the first "**THE**" and substitute "**1. THE**"; and after line 9, insert:

"2. PARATRANSIT ROUTES;

3. THE CORRESPONDING PARATRANSIT SERVICE AREA; AND

4. THE ESTIMATED NUMBER OF PARATRANSIT RIDERS IMPACTED;".

All Marylanders should be able to rely on travel plans to facilitate their various life activities. When transit agencies change routes or reduce service unexpectedly, the result can be extremely chaotic for riders, and cause serious disruptions to riders' day-to-day activities. Those with disabilities are no exception, as many people with disabilities rely on bus and paratransit to travel to critical events like work, school, and medical appointments. Of course, it's important that our transit agencies have the ability to adapt to demand to allow systems to function optimally for all, but there must be a clear process and means of notice and engagement for those impacted. House Bill 1507 provides such a process; the understanding that alterations to bus routes directly impact paratransit riders is paramount, and House Bill 1507 can address this linkage by including paratransit in this legislation.

In conclusion, House Bill 1507 is not just about transparency in transit changes; it is a crucial step toward ensuring accessibility and inclusivity for all individuals, including those with disabilities who rely on paratransit services.

For these reasons, DRM strongly supports House Bill 1507 with amendments, and requests a favorable report.

Respectfully,

/s/

Gabriel H. Rubinstein, Esq.

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HB1507 - MTA - Change In Bus Service - Impacts Rep

Uploaded by: Patricia Westervelt

Position: INFO

March 20, 2024

The Honorable Marc Korman
Chair, House Environment and Transportation Committee
251 House Office Building
Annapolis MD 21401

RE: Letter of Information – House Bill 1507 – Transportation – Change in Bus Service Impacts Report

Dear Chair Korman and Committee Members:

The Maryland Department of Transportation offers the following information on House Bill 1507 for the Committee's consideration.

As amended, House Bill 1507 would require the Maryland Transit Administration (MTA) to compile a report on the impacts of a proposed service change of an existing bus route or the corresponding paratransit service area, prior to announcing any service reduction or cancellation of that route. The report is to be published at least 30 days prior to holding a public hearing on the change and is to be shared with the Secretary of Transportation, Presiding Officers, Senate Finance Committee, House Environment and Transportation Committee, and each member of the General Assembly whose district would be impacted by the proposed service change.

The MTA regularly implements service changes to Core Bus service to ensure the complex system adapts to our passengers' changing travel needs and provides the best possible service with the resources available. The Fall Service Change is when major alignment and schedule changes are done to the network. When considering bus stop and route changes, MTA follows a ten-step process which considers factors such as race, income, and other socioeconomic variables to ensure no inadvertent impacts occur as relates to frequency and duration of service. This process includes an analysis of existing conditions, engagement with advisory groups and the public, and a service equity analysis. MTA develops a Riders Guide describing all proposed changes before public hearings are held. This information is provided on MTA's website and in print.

House Bill 9/Senate Bill 19 (2023) requires that, prior to holding a public hearing on a proposed service change, the MTA publish on its website an evaluation of the demographics of the riders of the routes and the service area; after completing public hearings, MTA is required to publish on its website a transportation equity analysis, cost-benefit analysis, and compile a report on the impacts of the proposed service change. The report is to be made public, as well as be submitted to the members of the Board of Public Works, the Attorney General, the Secretary of Transportation, any elected officials whose district would be impacted by the proposed service change, any community leaders consulted during the community outreach process, as well as the

The Honorable Marc Korman
Page Two

Presiding Officers, Senate Finance Committee, and the House Environment and Transportation Committee. The MTA is prepared to implement House Bill 9/Senate Bill 19 on July 1, 2024, when the law goes into effect.

In addition to what MTA will be required by law to report on, House Bill 1507 would require an additional report on the following: the schools and types of businesses in the service area, monthly ridership of the route and the effect the service change would have on commutes, the effect on the corresponding paratransit service area and the paratransit riders impacted, a description of the contents of any minutes, records, or documents related to the change, and a brief statement explaining the reason for the change. It should be noted that MTA would only be able to compile this additional information, as it pertains to only those service changes that require public hearings, defined under MTA's Title VI Major Service Change Policy. MTA implements minor service changes throughout the year, and these do not require public hearings. Additionally, the MTA seeks clarification that only public documentation or minutes would be required. It should be noted that House Bill 1507 now requires a report prior to public hearings, as well as current law that goes into effect July 1, 2024, which requires a similar report to be submitted after the public hearing process.

The Maryland Department of Transportation respectfully requests the Committee consider this information when deliberating House Bill 1507.

Respectfully submitted,

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