



# **WASHINGTON METROPOLITAN AREA TRANSIT AUTHORITY**

## **Public Testimony in Support of SB943**

### **Vehicle Laws – Bus Obstruction Monitoring Systems (Better Bus Service Act of 2024)**

#### **Before the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee**

**March 6, 2024**

Mr. Chairman, members of the committee, thank you for allowing me to testify today. For the record, my name is Charlie Scott and I am the Senior Government Relations Officer for the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA). I am here to urge your strong support for Senate Bill 943.

At Metro, we have just launched a program, in partnership with the District of Columbia, to begin automated enforcement of bus lane and bus stop parking violations. A portion of our bus fleet is now equipped with cameras to detect and record vehicles that are blocking bus lanes or bus stops. Any warnings or tickets are issued by the District of Columbia. The bus stop enforcement began in late 2023 and ticketing of vehicles in dedicated bus lanes started earlier this year.

Our focus, of course, is on improving the experience for our bus customers and we know that on-time performance is one of the key factors in improving customer satisfaction. The ability for our buses to access bus stops and make full use of dedicated bus lanes will improve reliability, making bus service more attractive to new customers.

Across the region, our jurisdictions have made investments to ensure that bus stops are ADA-accessible, so enabling enforcement of parking restrictions at bus stops will have direct benefits for customers with specific mobility needs.

In the District of Columbia, the Clear Lanes program includes enforcement at over 3,000 bus stops on Metrobus routes throughout the city. By including enforcement of bus stops, and not just bus lanes, the District is ensuring that residents of every ward realize the benefits that automated enforcement can provide.

The bus lane monitoring program applies to 12.7 miles of dedicated bus lanes in the District, covering a fraction of the route mileage covered by the bus stop monitoring.

For Maryland, I strongly encourage the General Assembly to enable this form of enforcement for both bus stops and bus lanes.

Even with just the 12.7 miles of dedicated bus lanes in the District of Columbia, that is still more than we have in Prince George's and Montgomery County. Dedicated bus lanes along an approximately two-mile segment of University Boulevard near Wheaton opened recently and our staff has worked in coordination with MDOT SHA on plans to implement targeted areas of dedicated bus lanes on Silver Hill Road in Suitland and Georgia Avenue in Silver Spring. While enabling this type of bus monitoring enforcement on dedicated bus lanes in these counties would benefit a segment of our riders, enabling enforcement at bus stops would yield widespread benefits to all riders, and particularly those with mobility needs.

For these reasons, I urge the Committee to provide a favorable report to SB943, and thank Senator Kelly for her sponsorship of this important legislation.