

March 27, 2025

The Honorable Pamela Beidle  
Chair, Finance Committee  
3 East Miller Senate Office Building  
Annapolis, MD 21401

***RE: Letter of Support with Amendments – House Bill 1144 –State Public Transit Service  
and Stations - Exclusion for Assault and Bodily Injury***

Dear Chair Beidle and Committee Members,

The Maryland Department of Transportation supports House Bill 1144 as a measure to protect MTA's valuable transit operators and offers the following information and amendment for the Committee's consideration.

As amended, HB 1144 requires the Maryland Transit Administration (MTA), by June 1, 2025, to convene a workgroup to create a rider code of conduct and implement a comprehensive internal safety program to strengthen protections for MTA operators and passengers. Until the rider code of conduct is adopted and the comprehensive internal safety program is implemented, a person who is alleged by a public transit operator to have committed an assault or other intentional act causing bodily injury to a public transit operator or a passenger while the person is on board a State public transit service or at a State public transit service station may be prohibited from using a State public transit service or entering a State public transit service station, under guidelines and subject to an appeals process established by MTA.

The MTA recognizes that transit operators are the backbone of a safe, efficient, and accessible transportation system and supports HB 1144 with amendment to further protect operators and riders. The MTA has already begun the process of implementing the rider code of conduct with the Joint Safety Committee (JSC), which has representation from both MTA management and union members. The JSC will play a key role in assessing the effectiveness of MTA's operator safety initiatives and recommending ongoing improvements.

MTA proposes an amendment to clarify the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority's (WMATA) role in MTA's internal process. Under the proposed amendment, MTA will review WMATA's forthcoming operator safety policy for best practices; however, the language would clarify that WMATA would not have an oversight and review role as a member of MTA's workgroup.

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The Maryland Transit Administration is eager to work collaboratively with its union partners and the General Assembly to find solutions that benefit our operators and passengers. The Maryland Department of Transportation respectfully requests that the Committee consider this information during its deliberation of House Bill 1144 and issue a favorable report with the suggested amendment.

Respectfully submitted,

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