

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2024 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
Third Reader

House Bill 1023

(Prince George's County Delegation and Montgomery
County Delegation)

Environment and Transportation

Finance

**Prince George's County and Montgomery County - The Washington Suburban
Transit Commission Reform Act**
PG/MC 103-24

This bill makes various changes related to the Washington Suburban Transit Commission (WSTC). Specifically, the bill (1) repeals the authority of the governing bodies of Montgomery and Prince George's counties to review and approve the contracts and agreements entered into by WSTC; (2) authorizes the WSTC commissioner that serves on the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) Board of Directors to be reappointed to the board; and (3) authorizes the Secretary of Transportation's designee to attend meetings of the WMATA Board of Directors on behalf of the Secretary when the Secretary is not available, instead of only if a scheduling conflict arises. When attending board meetings on behalf of the Secretary, the Secretary's designee must have the same powers as the Secretary.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: The bill does not materially affect State government operations or finances.

Local Effect: The bill does not materially affect local government operations or finances.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Current Law:

Washington Suburban Transit Commission

WSTC is responsible for administering the Washington Suburban Transit District and is authorized to develop a transportation system, including mass transit facilities, for Montgomery and Prince George's counties. It coordinates mass transit programs with the two county governments, WMATA, and the Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT). MDOT provides annual operating grants to WSTC, which then provides funding to WMATA for the operation of the Metrorail, Metrobus, and MetroAccess systems.

The commission consists of seven members: two appointed by the County Executive of Montgomery County; two appointed by the County Executive of Prince George's County; two appointed by the Governor; and one that is the Secretary of Transportation as an *ex officio* member.

WTSC's operations are governed by the public local laws of Montgomery and Prince George's counties. Among other things, the laws grant WSTC the power to make and enter into all contracts or agreements as it determines are necessary or incidental to the performance of its duties and to the execution of its powers, subject to the review and approval in whole or in part by the respective governing bodies of the counties.

Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority

WMATA was established in 1967 through an interstate compact among Maryland, Virginia, and the District of Columbia. The original purpose was construction and operation of a rapid rail transit system for the Washington metropolitan area. Maryland's overall participation in the Washington metropolitan transit system consists of the provision of annual funding to WMATA for capital and operating costs of the Metrorail, Metrobus, and MetroAccess systems. WMATA's operations are funded through operating revenues and subsidies provided by the compact signatories: Maryland, Virginia, and the District of Columbia. General parameters on capital funding levels are typically established in a six-year Capital Funding Agreement developed through negotiations between WMATA and its local funding partners.

WMATA's Board of Directors is responsible for determining WMATA policy and providing oversight of the funding, operation, and expansion of WMATA transit facilities. The board is comprised of eight voting members and eight alternate members. Maryland, Virginia, the District of Columbia, and the federal government each appoint two voting and two alternate members. Chapters 353 and 354 of 2018 require one of the State's voting

members to be the Secretary of Transportation or the Secretary's designee. The other voting member must be appointed by the Governor and meet other specified qualifications.

One of the commissioners appointed by the Governor to WSTC must also serve on the WMATA Board of Directors; however, this appointee may not be succeeded in office by a commissioner who is a resident of the same county.

Additional Information

Recent Prior Introductions: Similar legislation has not been introduced within the last three years.

Designated Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): Montgomery and Prince George's counties; Department of Legislative Services

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - March 5, 2024
js/lgc Third Reader - March 26, 2024

Analysis by: Richard L. Duncan

Direct Inquiries to:
(410) 946-5510
(301) 970-5510