
By: **Delegate Petzold**

Introduced and read first time: February 11, 2005

Assigned to: Rules and Executive Nominations

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION

1 A House Joint Resolution concerning

2 **Blue Ribbon Panel Recommendations for the Washington Metropolitan Area**
3 **Transit Authority**

4 FOR the purpose of supporting the recommendations of the Blue Ribbon Panel on the
5 capital funding needs for the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority.

6 WHEREAS, The governors of Maryland and Virginia and the Mayor of the
7 District of Columbia have designated the National Capital Region Transportation
8 Planning Board (Board) as the metropolitan planning organization for the
9 Washington Metropolitan area; and

10 WHEREAS, In February 2004, the Board issued a report, Time to Act, that
11 concluded that a substantial increase in the federal, State, regional, and local funding
12 commitment is necessary to meet the capital funding needs of the Washington
13 Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA); and

14 WHEREAS, A number of entities, including the United States General
15 Accounting Office, the Brookings Institution, and the Northern Virginia
16 Transportation Authority, have documented the financial difficulties faced by
17 WMATA and have suggested an independent analysis of the need for and potential
18 creation of one or more dedicated revenue sources for WMATA; and

19 WHEREAS, On September 8, 2004, the Metropolitan Washington Council of
20 Governments, the Greater Washington Board of Trade, and the Federal City Council
21 authorized the creation of a blue ribbon panel to verify and quantify the current and
22 future financial needs of WMATA, to identify and evaluate potential dedicated
23 revenue sources for WMATA, and to make the findings, conclusions, and
24 recommendations that the panel deems financially and legally workable and
25 appropriate; and

26 WHEREAS, Thirteen individuals with extensive knowledge and experience in
27 the areas of transit, economics, public finance, and political science were named to the
28 Panel on the Analysis of and Potential for Alternate Dedicated Revenue Sources for
29 WMATA with a charge to review existing research and analyses, to develop its own
30 research, to investigate the pros and cons of selected alternative dedicated revenue
31 sources, and to report to the three sponsoring organizations on or about December 15,
32 2004; and

1 WHEREAS, The panel was given independent professional staff, in addition to
2 the staff of the sponsoring organizations and WMATA, to assist the panel in meeting
3 its responsibilities; and

4 WHEREAS, The panel formally met seven times, communicated extensively on
5 a number of occasions between panel members and with staff, and sought public
6 comment twice, initially on the issues presented by the sponsoring organizations and
7 ultimately on the panel's draft report which was adopted on December 14, 2004; and

8 WHEREAS, The final report of the panel, issued on January 6, 2005, finds,
9 concludes, and recommends that: (1) Maryland, Virginia, and the District of Columbia
10 mutually implement a regional dedicated revenue source sufficient to address the
11 projected shortfall for WMATA capital maintenance and system enhancement; (2) the
12 preferable regional dedicated revenue source option is a regional sales tax or, if a
13 sales tax is not mutually acceptable to the three jurisdictions, other studied and
14 recommended options for consideration include a regional payroll tax or parallel
15 increases in property taxes; (3) farebox revenues should continue at the current
16 operating ratio of 57 percent; (4) the federal government should participate
17 significantly in addressing the shortfall for capital maintenance and system
18 enhancement; and (5) the federal, State, and local funding of paratransit, called
19 Metro Access, should be addressed separately from this financing effort; now,
20 therefore, be it

21 RESOLVED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND, That the
22 General Assembly of Maryland supports the recommendations of the Blue Ribbon
23 Panel; and be it further

24 RESOLVED, That the Governor be urged to work with the Governor of Virginia
25 and the Mayor of the District of Columbia and federal officials to place priority on the
26 development of a long-range plan for the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit
27 Authority; and be it further

28 RESOLVED, That the General Assembly invite the Governor to report on
29 progress on the plan during the 2006 legislative session; and be it further

30 RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution be forwarded by the Department of
31 Legislative Services to the Honorable Mark R. Warner, Governor of Virginia, the
32 Honorable Anthony A. Williams, Mayor of the District of Columbia, and the
33 Honorable Norman Y. Mineta, United States Secretary of Transportation, and the
34 Honorable Barbara A. Mikulski, and the Honorable Paul S. Sarbanes, United States
35 Senators, and the Honorable Wayne T. Gilchrest, the Honorable C. A. Dutch
36 Ruppertsberger, the Honorable Benjamin L. Cardin, the Honorable Albert R. Wynn,
37 the Honorable Steny H. Hoyer, the Honorable Roscoe G. Bartlett, the Honorable
38 Elijah E. Cummings, and the Honorable Christopher Van Hollen, Jr., United States
39 Representatives.