

May 27, 2016

The Honorable Michael E. Busch
Speaker of the House
State House
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Dear Mr. Speaker:

In accordance with Article II, Section 17 of the Maryland Constitution, I have vetoed House Bill 1010 – *Maryland Transit Administration Oversight and Planning Board*.

The proposed “oversight” provisions in House Bill 1010 represent a sophomoric attack on sound transportation policy by creating an unprecedented imposition of a politically–driven board to second–guess the authority of an executive branch agency. The board created by this bill does a disservice to the millions of taxpayers and visitors to Maryland that ride transit all over the State and continues the General Assembly’s attempts over the past two sessions to erode the long–established powers of Maryland’s Executive Branch.

House Bill 1010 would establish a Maryland Transit Administration (MTA) Oversight and Planning Board within the Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) with specific provisions related to membership, duties, and staffing of the board. MTA’s exercise of powers and duties would be subject to the authority of the board including reporting requirements on the MTA for any purpose when the board determines it is necessary to do so.

Perhaps the most alarming aspect of House Bill 1010 is its out and out rejection of the “One Maryland” principle in favor of a regional oversight board of a statewide agency. Specifically, the bill requires that 11 of 16 members of the oversight board come from just six jurisdictions in the State, to the exclusion of 19 other counties, representing over 3.25 million Marylanders who, through gas taxes and other measures, fund the MTA.

In short, more than half of the people in Maryland who will pay for the operation of MTA will have no say in its oversight, including the entire Eastern Shore, Western Maryland, Southern Maryland and the Washington D.C. suburbs, where the largest MTA project in a generation will soon begin. Simply put, that is a terrible idea. It is the equivalent of handing oversight of the Maryland Aviation Administration to Anne Arundel County, simply because that is where Baltimore/Washington International Thurgood Marshall Airport is located.

I have made statewide transit and transportation a top priority of my Administration, and MTA has several projects outside the Baltimore area. For example, the Administration in 2016 will begin the construction phase of the Purple Line, the largest transit project in Maryland history, exclusively in Montgomery and Prince

George's Counties. Additionally, increased attention to MARC train service in Montgomery and Frederick Counties as well as commuter bus and other transit options in Southern Maryland will require the focus of the Administration in coming years.

Additionally, the MTA Oversight and Planning Board proposed to be established by House Bill 1010 would review and comment on the operations, plans, and services of all locally-operated transit systems in the state. MTA provides over \$100 million statewide each year to local jurisdictions in the State and provides essential operational support to local transit systems. Locally-operated transit systems (LOTS) provide over 39 million trips each year, and in some of Maryland's rural areas, LOTS and other nonprofit transit organizations supported by MTA are the only means of transportation for disabled and transit-dependent individuals. These areas are sure to be neglected by an oversight board whose concentration will be on planning and development in the Baltimore area alone.

The MTA currently has three existing advisory councils comprised of riders. The Citizens' Advisory Council (CAC), the Consumers Advisory Council for Accessible Transportation (CACAT), and the MARC Riders Advisory Council meet on a monthly basis and provide valuable feedback to the Administration. While House Bill 1010 codifies all of these advisory councils, this is unnecessary. The current structure allows for maximum flexibility and adaptability to MTA's changing needs and priorities, while also giving the public and stakeholders meaningful input into MTA plans, projects, and initiatives.

Finally, House Bill 1010 requires the Administration to produce several reports and surveys at a cost of \$7.3 million in FY 2017 alone. These funds would surely be better used to provide transit service to Maryland residents instead of supporting an unnecessary bureaucracy.

Under my Administration, we have focused our attention on improving a long-neglected agency and have obtained tangible results. The MTA is succeeding according to every measurable metric in its core service area, including on-time performance, safety, and customer service, while continuing to support local transit in other parts of the State.

Placing a politically-motivated regional oversight board at MTA at a time of tremendous improvement and progress is unnecessary, unwarranted, and unwise. The oversight board as structured in House Bill 1010 does not fit the organization of the MTA within state government and would serve to impede the Administration's statewide mission at significant cost to the taxpayer.

For these reasons, I have vetoed House Bill 1010.

Sincerely,

Governor Lawrence J. Hogan, Jr.