

HOUSE BILL 491

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By: **Delegates Bridges, Boyce, Edelson, Wells, and Young**

Introduced and read first time: January 30, 2023

Assigned to: Appropriations and Environment and Transportation

A BILL ENTITLED

AN ACT concerning

Transportation – Commission to Study Establishing a Baltimore Regional Transit Authority

FOR the purpose of establishing a Commission to Study Establishing a Baltimore Regional Transit Authority; requiring the Commission to conduct a comprehensive study of establishing a Baltimore Regional Transit Authority; and generally relating to the Commission to Study Establishing a Baltimore Regional Transit Authority.

SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND,
That:

(a) There is a Commission to Study Establishing a Baltimore Regional Transit Authority.

(b) The Commission consists of the following members:

(1) the Secretary of Transportation, or the Secretary's designee;

(2) the Maryland Transit Administrator, or the Administrator's designee;

(3) (i) three members appointed by the Mayor of Baltimore City;

(ii) two members appointed by the Baltimore County Executive;

(iii) one member appointed by the Anne Arundel County Executive;

and

(iv) one member appointed by the Howard County Executive;

(4) (i) one Senator appointed by the President of the Senate; and

EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.

[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.



(ii) one Delegate appointed by the Speaker of the House; and

(5) the following members appointed by the Governor:

(i) as a nonvoting member, one representative from a transit worker labor union;

(ii) two representatives from major employment centers within the geographic area of the potential regional transit authority;

(iii) one representative from the Baltimore Metropolitan Council;

(iv) one representative from the transit–riding community;

(v) one representative from the Greater Baltimore Committee;

(vi) one representative from the Central Maryland Transportation Alliance;

(vii) one representative from the Greater Washington Partnership; and

(viii) one representative from the Transportation Association of Maryland.

(c) (1) The Commission shall conduct a comprehensive study of establishing a Baltimore Regional Transit Authority.

(2) The study shall:

(i) define the purpose and goals of the transit authority, including how the transit authority would:

1. serve the needs of the community; and

2. support economic development;

(ii) outline the specific powers and responsibilities of the transit authority, including the authority to:

1. acquire and operate transit systems;

2. levy taxes or fees; and

3. enter into contracts with other entities;

(iii) specify the structure and governance of the transit authority, including:

1. the number and composition of board members and local members;

2. strategies for seeking public input; and

3. sources and processes of oversight;

(iv) 1. identify potential impacts to existing labor and service contracts with the Maryland Transit Administration and locally operated transit systems; and

2. develop a workforce model and best practices to ensure staff well-being and expertise in delivering high quality service;

(v) 1. identify potential funding sources for the transit authority, including eligibility for federal and State grants and the ability to be a direct recipient of Federal Transit Administration funds; and

2. develop a funding model with recommendations on potential transit revenues, including taxes, fees, fares, and innovative revenue sources;

(vi) obtain input from stakeholders, including local jurisdictions, labor unions, community organizations, large employers, local businesses, and transit riders and advocates, to ensure the transit authority meets the needs of the community;

(vii) 1. consider any potential impacts on existing transit systems or agencies; and

2. offer strategies to minimize disruptions or negative impacts to existing transit systems or agencies; and

(viii) ensure compliance with relevant federal, State, and local laws and regulations by consulting with legal counsel to ensure the transit authority would be properly established and operated as a direct recipient of Federal Transit Administration funding.

(d) On or before October 31, 2024, the Commission shall submit a report of its findings and recommendations to the Governor and, in accordance with § 2-1257 of the State Government Article, the General Assembly.

SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect July 1, 2023. It shall remain effective for a period of 2 years and, at the end of June 30, 2025, this Act, with no further action required by the General Assembly, shall be abrogated and of no further force and effect.