



Larry Hogan
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Gregory Slater
Acting Secretary

February 4, 2020

The Honorable Maggie McIntosh
Chair, House Appropriations Committee
121 House Office Building
Annapolis MD 21401

**Re: Letter of Support – House Bill 402 – Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority
– Sovereign Immunity – Employee Whistleblower Protection**

Dear Chair McIntosh and Committee Members:

The Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) supports House Bill 402, as it will increase accountability by providing important protections for whistleblowers at the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority.

House Bill 402 would provide the same whistleblower protections for certain employees of the State to employees of WMATA. The legislation is contingent on Virginia and the District of Columbia enacting similar protections to WMATA employees

Maryland's subsidy to WMATA's operating and capital budgets represents a considerable investment in the State's taxpayer dollars. Maryland must ensure that this investment is being spent efficiently while providing the most reliable service for the most Marylanders. It is critical that safety be WMATA's primary focus, despite any internal or external pressures the organization or its employees experience. When any such pressure, regardless of source, prevents an employee from bringing to light a situation or condition which could compromise safety of the system, lives are put in jeopardy. Affording the employees and leadership of WMATA the same protections offered to employees of the State's executive branch agencies, will hopefully provide needed assurance that issues and concerns can be raised without fear of reprisal. Knowing that careers and livelihoods will not be jeopardized by taking honest and transparent actions, ultimately makes the WMATA system safer.

For these reasons, the Maryland Department of Transportation respectfully requests that the Committee grant House Bill 402 a favorable report.

Respectfully submitted,

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