

SB 424
Maryland Transit Safety & Investment Act
Senate Budget and Taxation Committee
February 12, 2020

Position: Support

Chairman Guzzone and Members of the Budget and Taxation Committee—

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today about a critical issue impacting millions across our region.

The Greater Washington Partnership (“Partnership”) is a civic alliance of the Capital Region’s leading employers and entrepreneurs stretching from Baltimore to Richmond that together employ more than 200,000 residents. Our transportation system is a priority for the Partnership as it is essential to ensuring the Capital Region is one of the best places to live, work and build a business.

We are fortunate to have dedicated public officials and active stakeholders working hard to make our transportation system the best it can be here in the Capital Region. For the business community, this is important because we require an efficient, multimodal transportation system that connects employees to jobs, students to class and patients to health care appointments.

Our transportation system must include a high-quality transit system. Unfortunately, the existing transit system in Maryland places the state and region at a competitive disadvantage because for too many the existing service is infrequent, unreliable and doesn’t connect residents to where they need to go. According to the Maryland Transit Administration’s Central Maryland Regional Transit Plan analysis, less than 25 percent of all households and jobs in the Baltimore metro area are located within walking distance of frequent all-day transit service. This ratio is too low, and is why the Regional Transit Plan – the first one created for Central Maryland in more than a quarter century – must be bold to position the transit system as a key asset for the region’s economy and its workers.

As we work to finalize the Regional Transit Plan in fall 2020, we cannot afford to let the existing system fall into further disrepair. Therefore, the Partnership supports Senate Bill 424.

SB 424 will fully fund the state’s identified capital investment needs for the Maryland Transit Administration, position the state to capitalize on the Central Maryland Regional Transit Plan and execute on the long-stalled MARC Growth & Investment Plans. This bill also provides additional funding in FY2022-2027 that can support other key enhancement priorities such as the Southern Maryland Rapid Transit project, the Corridor Cities Transitway, the replacement of the Civil War era B&P Tunnel in Baltimore and the redevelopment of Baltimore Penn Station.

We urge your support this year for SB 424. Our workforce, our economy, and our quality of life cannot afford to kick the can down the road. Thank you in advance for your leadership.

Sincerely,

Joe McAndrew
Director for Transportation Policy
Greater Washington Partnership

