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Appropriations Committee

Chair, Democratic Caucus



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THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

Testimony of Delegate Jazz M. Lewis

Regarding HB 886-- Public Safety – Elevator Inspections – Transit Compact Authority

On February 18, 2021

To Chair Barve, Vice-Chair Stein, and the members of the House Environment and Transportation Committee,

I urge a favorable vote on HB886

The Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority, WMATA, has instituted several safety measures to improve service delivery for workers and customers over the last decade. In 2012, following U.S. Senator Barbara Mikulski's lead, a new federal law required that states with rail transit systems identify or establish a State Safety Oversight Agency in their state to ensure that rail transit systems within their borders adhere to a new safety framework. The commonwealth of Virginia, the state of Maryland, and the District of Columbia joined together to craft an agreement creating the Washington Metrorail Safety Commission (WMSC), which was charged to oversee the WMATA rail safety system. Because of the multistate agreement's unique nature, Congress needed to formally approve the Compact, which it ratified in August 2017. The WMSC began directly overseeing the Metrorail system's safety on March 18, 2019, upon receiving federal certification.

Unbeknownst to many legislators, when we passed the Washington Metrorail Safety Commission, we left in statute oversight of elevator regulation and auditing with the Department of Labor, Licensing, and Regulation. Creating WMSC has created a regulatory framework where WMATA now has two regulators, DLLR and WMSC. The state contributes financially to WMSC, and our Secretary of Transportation is on the board of the agency. WMATA believes that double regulation is unnecessary and creates difficulties in deciding which regulation to follow.

Since introducing the bill, I have heard from the international union of electrical constructor's union local 10, IUEC, about potential concerns regarding DLLR no longer being the primary regulator. We are working with IUEC and WMATA to address those concerns.

Thank you for your time, and I urge a favorable vote on HB886.

