



WASHINGTON METROPOLITAN AREA TRANSIT AUTHORITY

Public Testimony in Support of HB 886 Public Safety – Elevator Inspections – Transit Compact Authority

**Before the House Environment and Transportation Committee
February 18, 2021**

Chairman, members of the committee, thank you for allowing me to testify today. My name is Brian Williams and I am the Compliance Manager for the Office of Elevator and Escalator Services at the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA). I thank Delegate Lewis for sponsoring HB 886 and urge a favorable report.

WMATA Elevator/Escalator Facts and Figures

Across the entire WMATA system, Metro owns, operates and maintains and inspects 321 elevators and 618 escalators. With ~35,000 escalators in the United States, WMATA owns almost 2 percent of our country's escalators, including the three longest escalators in the western hemisphere at the Wheaton station.

WMATA's Office of Elevator and Escalator Services (ELES) is overseen by a General Superintendent and employs 274 staff. To maintain an ongoing staff of skilled professionals, ELES has established an industry-leading apprenticeship program at Metro's Carmen Turner Facility in Landover. Over the past twenty years, this program has graduated almost 200 mechanics.

WMATA's ELES Office also includes a fully independent Office of Inspection and Compliance with a direct line of report to the ELES General Superintendent. These inspectors ensure safety and compliance with effective building codes and regulations and are certified to perform inspections on behalf of numerous jurisdictions including Arlington and Fairfax Counties and the District of Columbia.

Benefits of HB 886

Under this proposed legislation, these inspectors would have the primary responsibility for inspections of WMATA elevators and escalators in Maryland, with regulatory safety oversight undertaken by the Washington Metrorail Safety Commission (WMSC).

In addition to removing some redundancy of having two state-funded oversight agencies, there will be practical benefits of working with the WMSC given the Commission's focus on safety of the entire Metrorail system.

At Metro, for many of our stations, our escalators and elevators provide a critical means of egress. In fact, for stations with just one entrance, if multiple escalators are out of service, Metro's safety protocols require trains to bypass stations if the level of crowding would exceed the ability for passengers to evacuate the station.

Working closely with the WMSC, I envision a safety management system that prioritizes inspections and return to service of escalator and elevator units that are most critical to Metro's safe operations. Enabling such assessments of the criticality of each unit to the overall Metro system will also improve the customer experience for riders of our system.

For the Committee's reference, I am attaching background information on the full operations of WMATA's Office of Elevators and Escalator Services.

For the reasons I have stated, WMATA respectfully supports HB 886 and seeks a favorable report from this Committee.

Office of Elevators and Escalator Services

WMATA's Office of Elevators and Escalator Services (ELES) employs a staff of to 274 support the following services:

- Maintenance/Service
- Inspection/Compliance
- Capital Improvement Program
- Operation Control Center
- Material and Parts Group
- Engineering
- ELES Apprenticeship Program

ELES Maintenance

The ELES Maintenance Department maintains all vertical transportation equipment within the Authority. Keeping Metro's 618 escalators and 321 elevators in a state of good repair requires this group to perform scheduled preventative maintenance, respond to intermittent service outages, perform scheduled and emergency repairs, provide major event support, and deliver elevator entrapment rescue.

With 15 supervisors, 4 managers, 149 certified elevator mechanics, 11 helpers and 28 mechanic apprentices, the Maintenance team is committed to providing the safest and most reliable service to the riding public.

ELES Inspection & Compliance

ELES Compliance office manages the accountability of the department and is the liaison between regulators and WMATA to ensure safety and compliance with effective laws. This office is completely independent of the maintenance office and directly reports to the General Superintendent. This office has one manager, one assistant inspection manager, 6 inspectors and a compliance officer.

ELES CIP

ELES-CIP (Capital Improvement Program) Department was established in the late 90's to manage the rehabilitation or replacement of the oldest and poorest performing vertical equipment throughout the system.

ELES EOC (Elevator/Escalator Operation Control)

Elevator/ Escalator Operation Control maintains the role to dispatch crews for Emergency situations, communicating out of service conditions to the public and responding to customer issues. Other functions include data collection, maintenance scheduling and planning.

ELES Parts

The Parts Department is a twenty-four-hour operation that provides material to all ELES departments. The main goal of the department is to ensure materials used to support maintenance activities are always readily available. 12 truck drivers and 3 supervisors work in shifts around the clock to ensure materials are delivered to the job site in a timely, and efficient manner to minimize down time and improve elevator and escalator availability.

Engineering

The Engineering group reviews and approves drawings, writes technical specifications, provides field technical assistance and supports all vertical transportation projects. All elevator and escalator design is vetted and approved by ELES engineering prior to installation and modernization.

ELES Apprenticeship Program

In 1999 Metro established a multi-year in-house Apprenticeship Program to build a pipeline of certified professionals to help maintain the system. This program is a joint agreement between Metro, ATU Local 689 and accredited by the United States Department of Transportation. This program has graduated close to 200 mechanics. Applicants must meet one of the following minimum requirements for entry into the Apprenticeship Program.

- Enrollment and completion of a post -secondary technical training program appropriate for the elevator/escalator trade.
- Two years of high school vocational training appropriate for the elevator/escalator trade.
- Employment history demonstrating prolonged interest and progression in a comparable classification.
- Any combination of employment history/ or training demonstrates the individual's commitment/interest to progress in elevator.

All applicants are required to pass four levels of tests administered by WMATA. These tests consist of math, reading comprehension, mechanical aptitude and a

trade-related tests. The Carmen E. Turner Elevator training lab is a one of kind facility and is located in Landover, Md. The facility houses a fully working traction elevator, a hydraulic elevator, two different types of heavy transit grade escalators to allow mechanics the opportunity to train in all different types of vertical equipment. The program has become the model for all transit agencies and requires applicants seeking to become an apprentice to:

- Complete 1,000 hours of training
- Successfully complete all assigned courses of instruction written and practical assessment with passing score of 75% or higher.
- Complete On-the-Job Training (OJT) log form appropriate for time in Apprenticeship program
- Acceptable feedback from OJT Supervisors, Journeyman, Training Supervisor, OJT Administrator and Instructors.
- Individual work process records indicating appropriate completion of time in apprenticeship program.

In order to advance from Apprentice to Journeyman, the apprentice must successfully demonstrate the skills to fulfill the role of a competent Journeyman.

- Written Assessment- satisfactorily pass a comprehensive written final examination. This examination will be based on all related instructional material covered during the entire Program, as well as the National Association of Elevator Safety Authorities (NAESA).
- Practical Assessment- Practical examination based on a troubleshooting, preventative maintenance, and inspection task randomly selected by WMATA training staff.
- Work Processes- Have completed 8,000 hours Apprenticeship work requirement as stipulated in the Work Processes section of the WMATA Elevator/Escalator Repairer Apprentice Training Information manual.

The classroom training for our Apprenticeship emphasizes on interactive practical training modules to give real world elevator/escalator experience.

