



# POSITION STATEMENT

**TESTIMONY PRESENTED TO THE HOUSE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE**

**HOUSE BILL 1336 – GREATER BALTIMORE  
TRANSIT GOVERNANCE AND FUNDING COMMISSION**

**Sponsor – Delegate Bridges**

**March 10, 2022**

**DONALD C. FRY  
PRESIDENT & CEO  
GREATER BALTIMORE COMMITTEE**

**Position: Support with Amendment**

House Bill 1336 establishes the Greater Baltimore Transit Governance and Funding Commission to study and make recommendations about the funding, governance, and performance of mass transit in the greater Baltimore region. The members of the Commission would include one member of each legislative chamber, each appointed by the respective presiding officer, one individual who is an expert on mass transit issues in the region, appointed by the Governor, and three individuals from Baltimore City, two individuals from Baltimore County, and one individual from Anne Arundel County, each appointed by the mayor or county executive of the jurisdiction.

The Commission would be charged with reviewing the findings of the Baltimore Regional Transit Governance and Funding Study published by the Baltimore Regional Transportation Board in August of 2021. It would be required to recommend alternative governance and funding models for the Baltimore area transit system, identifying potential approaches that equitably distribute governance and funding responsibilities in mass transit, and improve performance, accountability, and ridership on Baltimore's transit system. An interim report would be required on December 1, 2022, with a final report due on December 1, 2023.

In 2008, the Greater Baltimore Committee (GBC) released a report titled: The Utility of Creating a Transportation or Transit Authority in the Baltimore Region. The report examined transit and transportation authorities around the country, looking at various types of boards, features necessary to a successful authority, and mechanisms for public accountability and transparency. While the report did not lay out a definitive path forward for creating an authority, it did highlight the complexity of such an undertaking as well as important components to be included in any plan.

The GBC maintains that having a locally accountable entity responsible for transportation decisions is a desirable goal. The difficulty in the creation of such an entity comes from the dissonance created by the inevitable shift of power and funding away from existing entities to the new governance structure. It is imperative that the Commission address these difficult issues, as well as make certain that there are reliable funding mechanisms in place to support the needs of the transportation system managed by any new entity.

The GBC would suggest that an amendment be added to House Bill 1336 to broaden representation on the Commission. The current provisions do not include any representation from Howard County or from the greater Baltimore business community. Howard County is an integral part of the region and should have representation on the commission. Transportation is a key issue for employers in the region, with many business locations lacking efficient public transportation options for their employees. The GBC respectfully requests the membership be amended to include two representatives of the business community, one from the Greater Baltimore Committee and another from the Maryland Chamber of Commerce, as well as a representative from Howard County.

**GREATER BALTIMORE COMMITTEE**

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House Bill 1336 is consistent with a key tenet in *Gaining the Competitive Edge: Keys to Economic Growth and Job Creation in Maryland*, a report published by the GBC that identifies eight core pillars for a competitive business environment and job growth:

**Superior transportation infrastructure with reliable funding mechanisms.** An essential prerequisite of a competitive business environment includes a well-funded and maintained highway, transit, port, and airport infrastructure that provides reliable and efficient options to move people, goods, and services.

For these reasons, the GBC respectfully requests the Committee give House Bill 1336 a favorable report, with the suggested amendments to Commission membership.

*The Greater Baltimore Committee (GBC) is a non-partisan, independent, regional business advocacy organization comprised of hundreds of businesses -- large, medium and small -- educational institutions, nonprofit organizations and foundations located in Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Carroll, Harford, and Howard counties as well as Baltimore City. The GBC is a 67-year-old, private-sector membership organization with a rich legacy of working with government to find solutions to problems that negatively affect our competitiveness and viability.*