

March 31, 2022

**Testimony on HB 1336 –
Greater Baltimore Transit Governance and Funding Commission –
Finance**

Position: FAVORABLE

My name is Anna Ellis. As a lifelong user of the Baltimore transit system, I would like to testify from a rider's perspective.

The Baltimore region deserves a reliable, well-functioning transit system. The current governance is not responsive to the needs of transit riders.

There are almost daily delays on the light rail. In my own experience since mid-October, 2021, when full light rail service was restored, it has been on time 65% of the time when I have used the service.

Riding the bus is another story. Of the 27 bus trips I attempted since last June, the bus was on time just 52% of the time, late 15%, early 15%, and did not show up at all 18% of the time. This is very much in contrast with the MTA's on time performance statistics, in large part because they do not count scheduled trips that do not occur in their on time performance statistics.

Unresponsiveness at MTA is not new. In 2005, after the double-tracking of light rail was complete, the new ticket machines did not work regularly. I called the MTA many times and kept track of when and where the machines did not work. There was no response, even after I sent a letter to the head of customer service for MTA. The problem was addressed only after I called the Sun, and they did a story about the malfunctioning ticket machines.

While the pandemic may have exacerbated the reliability problems and unresponsiveness at MTA, it certainly cannot be blamed for the issues we have experienced for decades.

Creating a regional transportation authority is needed because it should make the system more responsive to rider's needs, which is a first step to making the system more reliable, a necessary ingredient for a well-functioning transit system.

I support HB1336 to explore a transition to a regional transit authority. I respectfully encourage a favorable report. Thank you.

