



POSITION STATEMENT

TESTIMONY PRESENTED TO THE SENATE FINANCE COMMITTEE

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

Sponsor – Delegate Bridges

March 31, 2022

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

Position: Support

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, one from the Amalgamated Transit Union Local 1300, one from a transportation trade association, and one from the business community in the Greater Baltimore region, all appointed by the Governor; and three individuals from Baltimore City, two individuals from Baltimore County, one individual from Anne Arundel County, and one individual from Howard 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.

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:

GREATER BALTIMORE COMMITTEE

111 South Calvert Street • Suite 1700 • Baltimore, Maryland • 21202-6180

(410) 727-2820 • www.gbc.org

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.

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.