

Bridges Testimony HB794.pdf

Uploaded by: Asia Williams

Position: FAV

TONY BRIDGES
Legislative District 41
Baltimore City

Appropriations Committee



The Maryland House of Delegates
6 Bladen Street, Room 350
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
410-841-3283 · 301-858-3283
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Tony.Bridges@house.state.md.us

THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

To: The Honorable Members of the Appropriations Committee
From: Delegate Tony Bridges, Legislative District 41
Re: **Support** - House Bill 491 - Baltimore Regional Transit Commission - Establishment
Date: February 21, 2023

Good afternoon, Chair Barnes, and members of the Appropriations Committee,
In July 2022, Baltimore Metropolitan Council Board of Directors established the Baltimore Regional Transit Governance and Funding Workgroup with the objective of preparing recommendations regarding the management of transit in the Baltimore region. The Workgroup held four meetings from September to December 2022 and based their work on the Baltimore Regional Transit Board's extensive 2021 analysis of this issue. The Workgroup considered the alternatives from the original study and compared peer state and regional transit entities.

The Workgroup ultimately developed consensus around a set of five recommendations for timely action by our local governments, the Maryland General Assembly, and the Moore-Miller administration. One of those is the establishment of a Baltimore Regional Transit Commission.

House Bill 794 will establish the Baltimore Regional Transit Commission (BRTC). The Baltimore Regional Transit Commission will act as a policy oversight board with the responsibility to incorporate local and regional perspectives into the planning, design, and funding of transit services in the Baltimore region. This commission will oversee specific parts of the Maryland Transit Administration's (MTA) work in the Baltimore region. The main roles of the Committee include: (1) guiding and directing the MTA's transit investments in the Baltimore region, (2) facilitating a coordinated, integrated transit planning between the MTA and the Locally Operated Transit Service programs (LOTS), (3) approving MTA's annual budget for MTA's core transit service in the Baltimore region in relation to station area development and service improvements, and (4) the commission will serve as a fiscal agent with the ability to raise

and a bond additional revenue on top of what the State provides specifically for transit in the region, as BRTC member jurisdictions believe feasible and reasonable. This Commission will have members appointed by local governments, the speaker, the Senate president, and the governor, with the governor having a one appointee majority on the board.

This legislation is needed to give residents and citizens of the Baltimore region an avenue to participate in the decision-making process around transit in their own community. The MTA has been funding and operating public transportation in the Baltimore region under the direction of the Governor and Secretary of Transportation since the 1970s without input from an administrative body with representation from local or regional stakeholders. Among the 35 largest transit agencies in the United States, all but the MTA are governed by a board or commission. A board would allow for equity, transparency, oversight, and accountability in budgeting and decision-making, as well as advocating for the Baltimore regional transit service, and stability from changing political administrations. This legislation stands to improve Baltimore regional transit in a variety of crucial ways and for that reason I ask for a favorable report on House Bill 794.

HB 794_FAV_TMTCoalition.pdf

Uploaded by: Eric Norton

Position: FAV



February 21, 2023

**Testimony on HB 794 –
*Baltimore Regional Transit Commission – Establishment –
Appropriations***

Position: Favorable

The Transform Maryland Transportation Coalition is incredibly pleased to see the General Assembly considering this legislation to take another significant step toward the governance reform that we think is necessary to more effectively meet the needs of current riders and provide reliable service that attracts new riders. We encourage a favorable report.

Despite certain advantages to the current centralized governance structure of the Maryland Transit Administration (MTA), other structural flaws make maintaining and improving transit performance more difficult. Of the 50 largest transit agencies in the United States, MTA is the only one that is part of a state department of transportation without a board of directors and where decision-making lies solely with a governor. The lack of local participation in planning and funding decisions has been a contributing factor to the maintenance problems and lack of significant expansion or improvement in the last two decades. HB 794 is an important step in having more local input and oversight of the region's transit service.

We're glad to see that this bill acknowledges the importance of including the voice of transit riders by reserving seats for people who ride transit in the region. When making their appointments we encourage the appointing authorities to especially focus on transit riders with disabilities and those living in environmental justice communities.

We respectfully request a favorable report for HB 794.

The Transform Maryland Transportation Coalition is composed of more than thirty organizations with members throughout the state. Our mission is to create a robust, transformational, equitable and sustainable transportation system that helps meet our climate targets and serves all Marylanders.

www.tmtcoalition.org

HB0794 JOTF FAV - Baltimore Regional Transit Commi

Uploaded by: Ioana Stoica

Position: FAV

JOTF JOB OPPORTUNITIES TASK FORCE

Advocating better skills, jobs, and incomes

**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HOUSE BILL 0794:
Baltimore Regional Transit Commission - Establishment**

TO: Chair Ben Barnes and Members of the House Appropriations Committee

FROM: Ioana Stoica, Policy Advocate

DATE: Friday, February 17, 2023

The Job Opportunities Task Force (JOTF) is an independent, nonprofit organization that develops and advocates policies and programs to increase the skills, job opportunities, and incomes of low-wage workers and job seekers in Maryland. **JOTF strongly supports House Bill 0794 as a means of expanding transit access to low-income communities, particularly to residents of color, by taking the first step towards putting Baltimore City transit under local control.**

Mobility is key in Maryland's regional economy, and the lack of transportation is a significant barrier to employment and to access to critical services such as childcare, healthcare, and grocery stores. And while most Marylanders have some access to a car, research shows that low-income workers, as well as workers of color, are more likely to use public transportation. In Baltimore City, for example, 88% of homeowners have access to a car, but only 57% of renters have access to a car.

Lack of access to public transit by workforce participants that the Job Opportunities Task Force serves has been exacerbated by the redirection of funds from public transportation projects to those prioritizing highway projects serving predominantly white or high-income neighborhoods. The most stark example of this has been the canceling of Red Line work by Governor Hogan in 2015 - a decision that local control of Baltimore City transit may have prevented altogether.

JOTF has been following the work of the Baltimore Regional Transportation Board, submitted letters of support in favor of a Baltimore Regional Transit Authority and has been working closely with members of the Transform Maryland Transportation Coalition on this issue. We imagine a robust, equitable, sustainable transportation system in Maryland, but mounting evidence indicates that the way we govern and finance public transportation in Greater Baltimore is flawed. Riders, educators and employers say that transit is too inefficient and too unreliable. Underinvestment by Maryland's Governors and Department of Transportation has led to equipment breakdowns and worker shortages that undercut service and hurt riders.

The clear answer to us is establishing a Baltimore Regional Transportation Authority to govern and finance public transportation in the region, and this bill is a first step in this process. **For these reasons, we urge a favorable report on House Bill 794.**

For more information, contact:

Ioana Stoica / Policy Advocate / ioana@jotf.org / 240-643-0059

HB794_EconAction_FAV (2023).pdf

Uploaded by: Isadora Stern

Position: FAV



Testimony to the House Appropriations Committee
HB794: Baltimore Regional Transit Commission - Establishment
Position: Favorable

February 21, 2023

The Honorable Ben Barnes, Chair
Appropriations Committee
Room 121, House Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401
cc: Members, Appropriations Committee

Honorable Chair Barnes and Members of the Committee:

Economic Action Maryland (formerly the Maryland Consumer Rights Coalition) is a statewide coalition of individuals and organizations that advances financial justice and economic inclusion for Maryland consumers through research, education, direct service, and advocacy. Our 8,500 supporters include consumer advocates, practitioners, and low-income and working families throughout Maryland.

We are writing today in support of HB794. The bill seeks to establish a commission to reform the way public transportation is governed and financed. Structural challenges in the current centralized governance structure of the Maryland Transit Administration (MTA) make maintaining and improving transit performance difficult. The result is an unreliable public transportation system that further disadvantages many users already negatively impacted by poverty and structural racism, discourages ridership growth and puts the region at a competitive disadvantage compared to other metropolitan areas with robust, reliable public transit.

Baltimore City has the most expensive auto insurance of any county in Maryland. These high costs make it extremely difficult for low-income families to reach high paying jobs. Without a car and with a limited public transit system, it is nearly impossible to achieve economic mobility. In 2019, Maryland ranked among the bottom ten states for quality of state transportation infrastructure.¹ Even in regions with strong transit systems, many low-income families have trouble reaching jobs for which they are qualified. Some are forced to turn down good positions in favor of lower paying ones with transit access.

The lack of local participation in planning and funding decisions has been a contributing factor to ongoing maintenance problems (MTA buses and trains have some of the highest breakdown rates in the nation) and lack of significant expansion or improvement (last expansion of the system was in 1997). Of the 50 largest transit agencies in the country, the MTA is the only one that is part of a state department of transportation without a board of directors and where decision-making lies solely with a governor.

HB794 creates a governance and funding commission composed of regional and state stakeholders to oversee and approve administration and budgets, exercise oversight of and engage in advocacy for the

¹ <https://www.usnews.com/news/best-states/rankings/infrastructure/transportation>



Baltimore Region public transit systems maintained by the MVA, and engage the public and other nonprofit and civic foundations in the process. We believe that reforming the current system and creating the commission is a critical step for improving and expanding transit service, increasing oversight and accountability, and bringing additional local and federal funds for transit to the region.

For these reasons, we support HB794 and urge a favorable report.

Best,
Isadora Stern
Policy Manager

Baltimore's Transit Future support for BMC Transit

Uploaded by: John Hillegass

Position: FAV

BALTIMORE'S TRANSIT FUTURE

February 17, 2023

The Honorable Ben Barnes
Chair, House Appropriations Committee

***Re: Support for House Bills 0491, 0794, & 1072 | Senate Bills 0465, 0876, & 0875
The Commission to Study Establishing a Baltimore Regional Transit Authority; The Establishment of
the Baltimore Regional Transit Commission; & The Task Force to Study the Reconstitution of the
Maryland Transportation Commission***

Dear Chair Barnes and Committee Members,

On behalf of the signatories listed below, we are writing to express our support for House Bills 0491, 0794, & 1072 and cross-filed Senate Bills 0465, 0876, & 0875. The package of bills that we support are the recommendations of the Baltimore Metropolitan Council's (BMC) Baltimore Regional Transit Funding and Governance Workgroup (Workgroup) that was tasked with developing strategies to empower and strengthen transit in the Baltimore region – a goal that the Baltimore's Transit Future coalition firmly supports.

The BMC Workgroup met over the second half of 2022 to examine the governance and funding structure of the Maryland Transit Administration (MTA) and locally operated transit systems to develop options for increased equity, transparency, and regional decision making in the distribution of funds and transit project prioritization in the Baltimore region. The Workgroup included elected officials, business, public-sector, labor leaders, and technical experts from around the Baltimore metropolitan region. Their work culminated in a [final report](#) and legislative recommendations. The package of bills is outlined below:

- **House Bill 0491 | Senate Bill 0465** would create a commission to study the establishment of a Baltimore Regional Transit Authority (BRTA) as the Baltimore region is the only large metropolitan area in the nation whose transit is operated by a state agency without oversight of any board or commission. The commission would complete its work on or before October 31, 2024.
- **House Bill 0794 | Senate Bill 0876** would establish a Baltimore Regional Transit Commission (BRTC), as a regional authority is being studied, to create a formal mechanism for a state-local collaboration into how the local and regional transit network is planned, built, operated and funded.
- **House Bill 1072 | Senate Bill 0875** would establish a Task Force to study the reconstitution of the Maryland Transportation Commission (MTC) to provide the group the authority to provide oversight and transparency into the state's Consolidated Transportation Program (CTP) development. The intention of this change is to increase engagement and transparency around statewide transportation funding allocations and long-range plans, which is currently opaque. The Task Force would complete its work on or before December 31, 2024.

BALTIMORE'S TRANSIT FUTURE

The lack of collaboration between the state and local leaders into the planning, funding, and operations of the Baltimore region's transit system has hampered the development of a 21st century regional transit system that can adequately support inclusive economic growth, workforce development, and the needs of the region's most disenfranchised communities. Together, these bills would ensure that the governance and funding structure of Greater Baltimore's transit system are designed to be more responsive to the needs of the region's residents, businesses, and institutions.

The undersigned signatories and organizations request favorable reports for the package of bills because of their ability to strengthen regional coordination, decision making, and funding.

Sincerely,

Ballard Spahr LLP	Johns Hopkins University and Medicine
Baltimore Collegetown Network	Kaiser Permanente
CareFirst BlueCross BlueShield	Mahogany, Inc.
Central Maryland Transportation Alliance	MedStar Health
EcoMap Technologies	PNC
Greater Baltimore Committee	Tradepoint Atlantic
Greater Washington Partnership	Transit Choices
Howard County Chamber of Commerce	University of Maryland, Baltimore

About the Baltimore's Transit Future Campaign

The [Greater Baltimore Committee](#) and [Greater Washington Partnership](#) launched the Baltimore's Transit Future campaign to call attention to the urgent business imperative and need for the Greater Baltimore region to create a world-class public transit system that helps create shared economic prosperity and catalyzes inclusive growth. Since June 2022, more than 65 business, civic, and non-profit organizations, including many of the largest employers in the State, have joined the campaign encouraging regional focus on six priorities:

1. Address the transit system's repair backlog and operator shortage.
2. Establish frequent, reliable transit service to regional job centers.
3. Support regional coordination, decision making, and funding.
4. Implement a 10-year rapid transit expansion program.
5. Prioritize regional rail investment.
6. Catalyze equitable development at transit and rail stations.

The time for action is now. The residents and businesses of Maryland's largest city and surrounding suburbs deserve a world-class transit system. These six strategic priorities will set the course for a more equitable transportation system, making the Baltimore region a more attractive place to live, work, play, and build a business.

CE Ball 2023 - HB 794 Baltimore Regional Transit C

Uploaded by: Maureen Evans Arthurs

Position: FAV



HOWARD COUNTY OFFICE OF COUNTY EXECUTIVE

3430 Courthouse Drive ■ Ellicott City, Maryland 21043 ■ 410-313-2013 Voice/Relay

Calvin Ball
Howard County Executive
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www.howardcountymd.gov
FAX 410-313-3051

February 21, 2023

Delegate Ben Barnes, Chair
House Appropriations Committee
House Office Building, Room 121
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Re: **TESTIMONY OF SUPPORT: HB 794 – Baltimore Regional Transit Commission – Establishment**

Dear Chair Barnes, Vice Chair Chang, and Members of the Committee,

Howard County **SUPPORTS** House Bill 794 Baltimore Regional Transit Commission – Establishment. I commend Delegate Bridges and others in their proposal of this bill which will establish the Baltimore Regional Transit Commission to review and approve annual budget requests of the Maryland Transit Administration.

Both HB 491 and HB 794 arise from the work of BMC's Transit Governance and Funding Workgroup. Last year, the General Assembly passed HB1336 which formed a legislative commission to study the governance and funding of MTA. That bill was vetoed by Governor Hogan. BMC formed this workgroup last July to address the issues raised in HB1336. Members were appointed from four of our jurisdictions, as well as the legislature, the business community and labor. The ideas in these bills represent the collective ideas of a cross section of regional leaders and they come from a truly regional and collaborative process. As Chair of the Baltimore Metropolitan Council Board and on behalf Mayor Scott, County Executive Olszewski, and County Executive Pittman I am proud to offer the support of our local governments for this legislation.

All our communities expect bold leadership from elected representatives, but they also expect a voice in deliberative, transparent, and accountable decision-making process. The cancellation of the Red Line blocked funding, growth and opportunity that would have helped firm up the economic foundation of communities in the Baltimore region for decades to come. Our system here in Maryland allowed this decision to go unchecked. The oversight structure outlined in these bills would provide an important guardrail, with stakeholders from communities across the region building consensus on all major transit decisions. Local communities have a seat the table at every successful transit agency in the country. We've fallen behind, but it's not too late. These bills provide a path for setting a new standard in transit governance and finally delivering for our communities on this.

I welcome your support and urge a favorable report on HB 491 and HB 794.

All the Best,

Calvin Ball
Howard County Executive

CE Ball 2023 - HB 794 Baltimore Regional Transit C

Uploaded by: Meghan Lynch

Position: FAV



HOWARD COUNTY OFFICE OF COUNTY EXECUTIVE

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February 21, 2023

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House Appropriations Committee
House Office Building, Room 121
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

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I welcome your support and urge a favorable report on HB 491 and HB 794.

All the Best,

Calvin Ball
Howard County Executive

HB0491 (SB0465) + HB0794 (SB0876)_Workgroup Testim

Uploaded by: Mike Kelly

Position: FAV



Testimony Presented to the House Appropriations Committee

HB0491 - Transportation – Commission to Study Establishing a Baltimore Regional Transit Authority; and HB0794 - Baltimore Regional Transit Commission – Establishment

Sponsor: Delegate Bridges

Position: Favorable

This testimony is submitted by the members of the Baltimore Metropolitan Council’s Transit Governance and Funding Workgroup (TGFW). The TGFW was appointed by the Baltimore Metropolitan Council’s Board of Directors to identify meaningful recommendations to develop a more effective and inclusive regional transit system in the Baltimore region.

The TGFW met from August through December, 2022. We are pleased to support HB0491 and HB0794, which reflect two of the recommendations from our report published in January 2023.

The Maryland Transit Administration (MTA) is the nation’s only large transit agency that is not governed by a board, commission or council. Over time, this structure has allowed for little accountability; fostered disinvestment in the system; and allowed for the cancellation of the Red Line with no input from the residents and local governments of the Baltimore region.

Further, the lack of coordination between state and local government plans regarding transit, land use, economic development - and even traffic operations - have resulted in a system that is not aligned with providing convenient and equitable connections for riders to regional job centers, schools, recreational activities and healthcare facilities.

These bills, intended to work in concert, will establish a working partnership between State and Local government and help our region develop a world-class system that best serves the needs of current and future transit riders.

HB0491 is the definitive study of whether the Baltimore region should have an independent transit authority. This question has been the subject of conversation since the cancellation of the Red Line. While an authority offers many benefits, there are complex questions that must be answered before undertaking such a substantial step. Issues such as financial considerations, current labor and service contracts, ownership of physical assets, board structure must be considered before determining whether any gained benefits are worth the potential risks and costs. Commencing this study now, within the term of the new administration, provides an opportunity to act on any recommendations and next steps resulting from this study.



HB0794 would create an immediate partnership between State and Local government and provide much needed public accountability by creating a targeted and limited governing structure over MTA. The BRTC will have two limited, but specifically targeted powers. (1) Approval of the MTA's budget for Baltimore's core service area, to ensure necessary and appropriate funding. (2) Approval of the Central Maryland Regional Transit Plan implementation and updates - to make sure we are maintaining the system and planning for the future. The BRTC gives local government a formal voice in transit, as a partner to MTA, for the first time in over 50 years.

Together, these bills would provide a transformational opportunity to include local voices, coordinate transit and land use decisions, and better meet the needs of current and future riders throughout the greater Baltimore region.

We strongly encourage **FAVORABLE** reports for **HB0794** and **HB0491**. Thank you for your consideration.

BMC TRANSIT GOVERNANCE AND FUNDING WORKGROUP MEMBERS

Tony Bridges, Maryland State Delegate, Baltimore City, District 41

Dr. Celeste Chavis, Associate Professor of Transportation and Urban Infrastructure Studies, Morgan State University

Andrew Gena, Director of Strategic Research, Amalgamated Transit Union AFL-CIO/CLC

Tasha Gresham-James, Executive Director, Dundalk Renaissance

Ron Hartman, Adjunct Lecturer, Georgetown University

Jon Laria, Managing Partner, Ballard Spahr

Michael McMillan, President & Business Agent, Amalgamated Transit Union Local 1300

Tony Scott, Associate Director for Project Management, Baltimore Mayor's Office of Infrastructure

Samuel Snead, Director, Anne Arundel County Department of Transportation

Aaron Tomarchio, Executive Vice President of Corporate Affairs, Tradepoint Atlantic

D'Andrea Walker, Acting Director, Baltimore County Department of Public Works & Transportation

Mary Washington, Maryland State Senator, Baltimore City, District 43

Anne Arundel County_FAV_HB794.pdf

Uploaded by: Steuart Pittman

Position: FAV



February 21, 2023

House Bill 794

Baltimore Regional Transit Commission - Establishment

Appropriations and Environment and Transportation Committees

Position: SUPPORT

This bill establishes the Baltimore Regional Transit Commission (BRTC) to review and approve annual budget requests of the Maryland Transit Administration (MTA), updates to the Central Maryland Transportation Plan, and annual reports on the Administration's state of good repair, and to perform other oversight and advocacy duties related to Baltimore region transit services. The Bill will ensure that the BRTC has limited, but specifically targeted powers, to make sure our region is asking for necessary and appropriate funding, and to make sure we are maintaining the system and planning for the future.

This Bill will give local governments a formal voice in transit for the first time in over 50 years. The MTA has been providing public transportation to connect people to jobs, schools, and other important destinations in the Baltimore region since the early 1970s. The MTA services play a critical role in the Baltimore region's transportation network by operating multiple modes of transit for commuters, helping to alleviate traffic congestion on roads, reducing air pollution, and improving overall mobility. In addition, the MTA plans and operates a network of transit service (bus, light rail, and metro services) in Baltimore City, Baltimore County, and Anne Arundel County. It also operates a regional commuter bus service, MARC, and paratransit service. MTA is especially important in Baltimore City, and continuing to invest in transit infrastructure will have long-term benefits for the economic and social development of our region.

Unlike WMATA, which has a board of directors, MTA's planning, budget, and investment decisions are ultimately made by the Governor and Secretary of Transportation, with support from MTA staff. This structure of decision-making without representation from local or regional stakeholders is a national outlier. Of the 35 largest transit agencies in the country, a board or commission governs all but one – MTA.

As key partners with the State, it is time for local governments to have a seat at the table as we all work together to build, expand, and maintain a regional transit system that will spur economic growth and improve the quality of life of our residents. For those reasons please give a **FAVORABLE** report on HB 794.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Stuart Pittman".

Stuart Pittman
County Executive

BaltimoreCounty_FAV_HB0794.pdf

Uploaded by: Twana Allen

Position: FAV



JOHN A. OLSZEWSKI, JR.
County Executive

JENNIFER AIOSA
Director of Government Affairs

AMANDA KONTZ CARR
Legislative Officer

JOSHUA M. GREENBERG
Associate Director of Government Affairs

BILL NO.: **HB 491 / 794**

TITLE: **Transportation – Commission to Study Establishing a Baltimore
Regional Transit Authority**

Baltimore Regional Transit Commission - Establishment

SPONSOR: **Delegate Bridges**

COMMITTEE: **Appropriations**

POSITION: **SUPPORT**

DATE: **February 21, 2023**

Baltimore County **SUPPORTS** House Bill 491 – Transportation – Commission to Study Establishing a Baltimore Regional Transit Authority, as well HB 794. House Bill 491 would establish a Commission to Study Establishing a Baltimore Regional Transit Authority. House Bill 794 Would establish the Baltimore Regional Transit Commission to perform oversight and advocacy duties related to Baltimore region transit services.

Baltimore County is the third most populous jurisdiction in Maryland, home to more than 850,000 residents. Many of our residents work elsewhere in the region, and many rely on safe, efficient, and reliable regional transit. Unfortunately, Baltimore County, like other local jurisdictions in the Baltimore Region have limited control on how State transit serves our residents. For example, roughly 40% of the Maryland Transit Administration's (MTA) local bus lines serve Baltimore County, but the County has no input in what those routes look like.

The local jurisdictions of the Baltimore Region need to be part of the discussions regarding how regional transit needs are met. HBs 491 and 794 would afford Baltimore County and neighboring jurisdictions a seat at the table. HB 491 would create a commission to undertake a comprehensive evaluation of establishing a Baltimore Regional Transit Authority. This group would be tasked with studying a full range of considerations related to formally changing the operations, planning, governance, and financing of a regional authority, and find answers to legitimate questions regarding the creation of such an authority. Last year, HB 1336, a similar bill to create a commission to evaluate the findings of the 2021 Baltimore Regional Transit Governance and Funding Study, was a Baltimore County priority.

HB 794 is a complimentary bill that would establish a Baltimore Regional Transit Commission, staffed by the existing Baltimore Metropolitan Committee (BMC) to review and provide feedback on State transit planning and engage transit stakeholders and residents who rely on transit services in such feedback to the State. This Commission could begin its cross-jurisdictional efforts in 2023, and formally give our jurisdictions a role in planning and operation of the transit that serves our residents, while the longer-term issues related to potentially changing the governance authority is thoroughly investigated.

The Baltimore Region is a hub of economic activity, cultural resources, and recreational offerings and is home to and visited by millions. Our residents, businesses, and visitors deserve high quality, safe and efficient transit now and into the future.

Accordingly, Baltimore County requests a **FAVORABLE** report on HB 491/HB 794. For more information, please contact Jenn Aiosa, Director of Government Affairs at jaiosa@baltimorecountymd.gov.

HB 794 - Baltimore Regional Transit Commission - E

Uploaded by: Donna Edwards

Position: FWA



MARYLAND STATE & D.C. AFL-CIO

AFFILIATED WITH NATIONAL AFL-CIO

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President

Donna S. Edwards

Secretary-Treasurer

Gerald W. Jackson

HB 794 - Baltimore Regional Transit Commission - Establishment House Appropriations Committee February 21, 2023

SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENT

**Donna S. Edwards
President**

Maryland State and DC AFL-CIO

Chairman and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of HB 794 with amendments. My name is Donna S. Edwards, and I am the President of the Maryland State and District of Columbia AFL-CIO. On behalf of Maryland's 300,000 union members, I offer the following comments.

Following the recommendations of the Baltimore Metropolitan Council's Regional Transit Governance and Funding Workgroup, HB 794 creates a Baltimore Regional Transit Commission (BRTC). Representatives from ATU Local 1300 and ATU International fully participated in this study process. The BRTC provides oversight and local input on the Maryland Transit Administration's policies regarding operating and capital budget requests for bus, light rail, metro, commuter bus, MARC service, and paratransit in the Baltimore region.

We believe that the language on Page 3, Line 1, "*One nonvoting member who is an employee of the Administration and is a member of the largest labor union in the Baltimore region, designated by the labor union.*" is confusing and potentially undermines its intent of providing representation to ATU Local 1300. If the goal is to provide non-voting representation to transit worker labor representatives, then the bill should follow past practices and say, "*One nonvoting member of a Baltimore area transportation labor organization, designated by the Maryland State and District of Columbia AFL-CIO.*" This language borrows from 2022's HB 141 which created an advisory committee on transit equity but was vetoed by Governor Hogan. As currently written, it implies that the appointee would have to work at MTA and be a member of the largest union in the Baltimore region, which may not be ATU Local 1300. HB 794 also calls on the BRTC to convene subcommittees to gather feedback, information, and suggestions from nonprofits, civic organizations, employers, and transit riders. Frontline transit workers must be included as well. We propose adding, "*the Administration's frontline transit workers,*" to Section (G) (10) on Page 5, Line 10, following "*nonprofit organizations,*" and before "*civic foundations.*"

We urge the committee to issue a favorable report for HB 794 with the amendments provided.

ATU 1300 HB 794.pdf

Uploaded by: Michael McMillan

Position: FWA

**Statement of Amalgamated Transit Union (ATU) Local 1300
HB 794
House Appropriations Committee
February 21, 2023**

ATU Local 1300 in Baltimore, representing more than 2,600 transit workers at the Maryland Transit Administration (MTA), supports the establishment of the Baltimore Regional Transit Commission as proposed in HB 794 with two amendments to the legislation.

ATU has participated in the Baltimore Regional Transit Governance and Funding Workgroup throughout the past year. Creating a BRTC to approve the MTA's budget for the Baltimore area and approve the Central Maryland Regional Transit plan will help foster transparency as we strive for effective and equitable transit in the region.

The ATU proposes a clarifying amendment to ensure representation from the union that represents frontline transit workers at the MTA on the Baltimore Regional Transit Commission established by HB 794.

Amending Section B(5) to read "*One nonvoting member from Amalgamated Transit Union Local 1300*" is preferred but "*One nonvoting member who is an employee of the administration and is a member of the labor union representing the plurality of transit workers in the Baltimore metropolitan region, designated by the labor union.*" is also suitable.

Additionally, we propose that Section G(10) be amended to read:

"Convene subcommittees or other appropriate entities to gather information and suggestions from the Administration's frontline transit workers, nonprofit organizations, civil foundations, employers, and the transit riders regarding transit service in the Baltimore region;"

We otherwise support HB 794 as written, and look forward to collaborating as part of the BRTC.

HB0794 - MTA - Commission Establishment - LOI_FINA

Uploaded by: Pilar Helm

Position: INFO

February 21, 2023

The Honorable Ben Barnes
Chair, House Appropriations Committee
Room 121, House Office Building
Annapolis MD 21401

RE: Letter of Information – House Bill 794 – Baltimore Regional Transit Commission - Establishment

Dear Chair Barnes and Committee Members:

The Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) takes no position on House Bill 794 but offers the following information for the Committee's consideration. MDOT and the Maryland Transit Administration (MTA) look forward to continuing to work with the bill sponsor towards the common goals of this bill which include, increased transparency, collaboration, and strategic planning.

House Bill 794 would establish the Baltimore Regional Transit Commission to review and approve annual budget requests of the MTA, updates to the Central Maryland Regional Transportation Plan, annual reports on the Administration's state of good repair, and to perform other oversight and advocacy duties related to Baltimore region transit services. The Commission would be staffed by the Baltimore Metropolitan Commission (BMC); however, it would also require significant staff resources from MTA.

As drafted, some of the duties and responsibilities of the Commission outlined in House Bill 794 are duplicative of current efforts. For example, BMC staff currently participate in and review many MTA reports and planning efforts of regional significance. MTA regularly presents these efforts to the Baltimore Regional Transit Board (BRTB). The BMC also has an existing technical committee that reviews and coordinates on transit services proposed for the Baltimore region. MDOT, MTA, and BMC regularly convene efforts to gather information from transit riders and stakeholders regarding transit service in the Baltimore region.

Additionally, the draft Consolidated Transportation Program (CTP) is presented annually to each jurisdiction in the State. This is drafted through inclusion of local priority letters, which are submitted beginning in April, and further comments continue to be received throughout the annual CTP Tour meetings in the fall. Lastly, in addition to MDOT submitting the Annual State Report on Transportation to the Legislature, MTA reports to the Legislature each year on its progress in implementing the Capital Needs Inventory, its progress in converting to Zero-Emission Bus, and the Capital Needs Inventory Report describing 10-year state of good repair needs and progress every three years.

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House Bill 794 requires the Commission to review and approve MTA's "annual operating and capital budget request for the Baltimore Region." It is important to note that MTA does not make an annual budget request but the MDOT Secretary establishes the budget for the entirety of the Department, including each transportation mode. The budget referenced in 2-103.1 is the Secretary's budget for the department, which is submitted to the legislature. As noted above, the CTP is currently developed through a process that involves direct jurisdictional engagement. The BRTB currently approves all budget requests for spending federal transportation funds in the Baltimore region through the region's federally required Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).

The MTA is actively engaged with the bill sponsor and looks forward to continuing collaboration to address the concerns outlined above. The Maryland Department of Transportation respectfully requests the Committee consider this information when deliberating House Bill 794.

Respectfully submitted,

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