

Crossover SB 876 Economic Action MD Testimony 2023

Uploaded by: Isadora Stern

Position: FAV



Testimony to the House Appropriations Committee

SB 876: Homeowners' Property Tax Credit - Qualified Homeowner - Application and Certification Requirements

Position: Favorable

March 29, 2023

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

Honorable Chair Barnes and Members of the Committee:

Economic Action Maryland (formerly the Maryland Consumer Rights Coalition) is a people-centered movement to expand economic rights, housing justice, and community reinvestment for working families, low-income communities, and communities of color. Economic Action Maryland provides direct assistance today while passing legislation and regulations to create systemic change in the future.

Economic Action Maryland (formerly the Maryland Consumer Rights Coalition) is a people-centered movement to expand economic rights, housing justice, and community reinvestment for working families, low-income communities, and communities of color. Economic Action Maryland provides direct assistance today while passing legislation and regulations to create systemic change in the future.

We are here in support of SB 876. 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. 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.



**ECONOMIC
ACTION MD**

SB 876 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 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 SB 876 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

March 14, 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	Howard County Chamber of Commerce
Baltimore City Chamber of Commerce	Johns Hopkins University and Medicine
Baltimore Collegetown Network	Kaiser Permanente
Baltimore MARC Riders	Mahogany, Inc.
CareFirst BlueCross BlueShield	MedStar Health
Central Maryland Transportation Alliance	PNC
EcoMap Technologies	Tradepoint Atlantic
Greater Baltimore Committee	Transit Choices
Greater Washington Partnership	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.

BaltimoreCounty_FAV_SB 465 - SB 876.pdf

Uploaded by: Joshua Greenberg

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.: **SB 465 / SB 876**

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

Baltimore Regional Transit Commission - Establishment

SPONSOR: Senator M. Washington

COMMITTEE: Appropriations

POSITION: **SUPPORT**

DATE: March 29, 2023

Baltimore County **SUPPORTS** Senate Bill 465 – Transportation – Commission to Study Establishing a Baltimore Regional Transit Authority, as well SB 876. Senate Bill 465 would establish a Commission to Study Establishing a Baltimore Regional Transit Authority. Senate Bill 876 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. SBs 465 and 876 would afford Baltimore County and neighboring jurisdictions a seat at the table. SB 465 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.

SB 876 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 SB 465/SB 846. For more information, please contact Jenn Aiosa, Director of Government Affairs at jaiosa@baltimorecountymd.gov.

SB0876 - MTA - Baltimore Regional Transit Commis

Uploaded by: Patricia Westervelt

Position: INFO



Wes Moore
Governor
Aruna Miller
Lieutenant Governor
Paul J. Wiedefeld
Secretary

March 29, 2023

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

RE: Letter of Information – Senate Bill 876 – Baltimore Regional Transit Commission - Establishment

Dear Chair Barnes and Committee Members:

The Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) takes no position on Senate Bill 876 but offers the following information for the Committee's consideration. MDOT and the Maryland Transit Administration (MTA) have appreciated the collaboration with the bill sponsor to work towards the common goals of this bill which include, increased transparency, collaboration, and strategic planning.

Senate Bill 876 would establish the Baltimore Regional Transit Commission to comment on annual budget requests of the MTA, updates to the Central Maryland Regional Transportation Plan, annual reports, including the Capital Needs Inventory, 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 Senate Bill 876 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.

The Maryland Department of Transportation respectfully requests the Committee consider this information when deliberating Senate Bill 876.

Respectfully submitted,

David Myers
Director of Governmental Affairs
Maryland Transit Administration
410-767-0820

Pilar Helm
Director of Government Affairs
Maryland Department of Transportation
410-865-1090