



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