

February 24, 2023

The Honorable Delegate Ben Barnes  
Chair, Appropriations Committee  
Maryland House of Delegates  
House Office Building, Room 121  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Re: **Support** for House Bill 0673, Maryland Transit Administration – Fare Price Requirements – Alterations

Dear Chair Barnes and Committee Members:

On behalf of the signatories listed below, we are writing to express our support for House Bill 0673, which would provide the Maryland Transit Administration (MTA) freedom to set transit fare prices in line with equity and ridership goals, by removing the mandate to increase fares in line with inflation.

The Transportation Infrastructure Investment Act of 2013 requires that when the Consumer Price Index (CPI) increases over two years, MTA must increase transit fares by a minimum of 10 cents or higher for Local Bus, Light RailLink, Metro SubwayLink and MobilityLink service, in line with the CPI. According to the [Maryland Transit Administration \(MTA\) 2020-2023 Title VI Implementation Program](#), between 2015-2018, 83% of MTA bus riders were Black and 92% earned less than \$50,000 per year. Riders of the Subway and Light Rail systems were also majority Black and majority low-income.

As nearby transit systems in Washington, DC, Montgomery County, Alexandria, and Richmond explore reduced fares or fare free transit systems, MTA is required to regularly increase transit fares, paid for by the most vulnerable residents, without raising significant new revenues for transit operations. The inflexibility of this regulation limits the state's ability to advance transportation equity and harms the region's economic competitiveness and inclusive growth.

This bill removes the mandated fare increase, giving the MTA more flexibility to set fare prices in line with the administration's goals and business needs. The undersigned signatories and organizations hope House Bill 0673 receives a favorable report.

Page Two

**Support** for HB 673 - Maryland Transit Administration – Fare Price Requirements – Alterations

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Cheryl Cort', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Cheryl Cort, Coalition for Smarter Growth

Lindsey Mendelson, Maryland Sierra Club

William Clements, Gaithersburg HELP

Claudia Wilson Randall, Community Development Network of Maryland

Basav Sen, Institute for Policy Studies Climate Policy Program