

TONY BRIDGES  
Legislative District 41  
Baltimore City

Appropriations Committee



The Maryland House of Delegates  
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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.