



February 21, 2023

House Bill 491

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

Appropriations and Environment and Transportation Committees

Position: SUPPORT

This bill establishes a Commission to Study Establishing a Baltimore Regional Transit Authority, requires the Commission to conduct a comprehensive study of establishing a Baltimore Regional Transit Authority, and requires the Commission to submit a report of its findings and recommendations to the Governor and the General Assembly by October 31, 2024.

In July 2022, the Baltimore Metropolitan Council (BMC) established the Baltimore Regional Transit Governance and Funding Workgroup. HB 491 is the result of a recommendation of the workgroup. While the workgroup believes a Regional Transit Authority is the right step forward, it recognized the complexity and challenges of creating an authority.

HB 491 is the appropriate step forward. By studying the issue closely, we will answer two critical questions: First, is an authority the right thing? The State, local governments and key partners will formally weigh the pros and cons and make this decision. And, if creating an authority is the right for the future direction of the state, what steps are needed to establish an authority? This second question is critical. If the study commission decides to recommend an authority, the legislation requires the commission to develop strategies for many complex issues, including the transfer of assets, labor agreements, federal designation, board structure, and funding. If the study commission calls for an authority, the legislation will be ready for the 2025 session.

Maryland deserves a world class transit system that spurs economic growth and improves the quality of life of our residents. This bill is a responsible step forward as we make decisions that will impact Marylanders ability to get around our great state. For those reasons please give a **FAVORABLE** report on HB 491.

Stuart Pittman
County Executive