



February 21, 2023

House Bill 794

Baltimore Regional Transit Commission - Establishment

Appropriations and Environment and Transportation Committees

Position: SUPPORT

This bill establishes the Baltimore Regional Transit Commission (BRTC) to review and approve annual budget requests of the Maryland Transit Administration (MTA), updates to the Central Maryland Transportation Plan, and annual reports on the Administration's state of good repair, and to perform other oversight and advocacy duties related to Baltimore region transit services. The Bill will ensure that the BRTC has limited, but specifically targeted powers, to make sure our region is asking for necessary and appropriate funding, and to make sure we are maintaining the system and planning for the future.

This Bill will give local governments a formal voice in transit for the first time in over 50 years. The MTA has been providing public transportation to connect people to jobs, schools, and other important destinations in the Baltimore region since the early 1970s. The MTA services play a critical role in the Baltimore region's transportation network by operating multiple modes of transit for commuters, helping to alleviate traffic congestion on roads, reducing air pollution, and improving overall mobility. In addition, the MTA plans and operates a network of transit service (bus, light rail, and metro services) in Baltimore City, Baltimore County, and Anne Arundel County. It also operates a regional commuter bus service, MARC, and paratransit service. MTA is especially important in Baltimore City, and continuing to invest in transit infrastructure will have long-term benefits for the economic and social development of our region.

Unlike WMATA, which has a board of directors, MTA's planning, budget, and investment decisions are ultimately made by the Governor and Secretary of Transportation, with support from MTA staff. This structure of decision-making without representation from local or regional stakeholders is a national outlier. Of the 35 largest transit agencies in the country, a board or commission governs all but one – MTA.

As key partners with the State, it is time for local governments to have a seat at the table as we all work together to build, expand, and maintain a regional transit system that will spur economic growth and improve the quality of life of our residents. For those reasons please give a **FAVORABLE** report on HB 794.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Stuart Pittman".

Stuart Pittman
County Executive