

TO: The Honorable Guy Guzzone
Chair, Budget & Taxation Committee

FROM: Michael Huber
Director, State Affairs

DATE: March 1, 2023

RE: SB465 – Transportation – Commission to Study Establishing a Baltimore Regional Transit Authority

Johns Hopkins University and Medicine urges a favorable report on **SB465 – Transportation – Commission to Study Establishing a Baltimore Regional Transit Authority**. This bill would create a commission to study the establishment of a Baltimore Regional Transit Authority (BRTA) as the Baltimore region is the only large metropolitan area in the nation whose transit is operated by a state agency without oversight of any board or commission. The commission would complete its work on or before October 31, 2024.

The lack of collaboration between the state and local leaders into the planning, funding, and operations of the Baltimore region’s transit system has hampered the development of a 21st century regional transit system that can adequately support inclusive economic growth, workforce development, and the needs of the region’s most disenfranchised communities.

The Maryland Transit Administration (MTA) is the only large transit agency in the country that is not governed by any board or commission. The results for the Baltimore region are clear: MTA has not built a rail project in Baltimore since 1993. MTA was initially established to serve the Baltimore region. In the last eight years, MTA’s major projects have been outside of the Baltimore region.

As the State’s largest private employer, with more than 53,000 Marylanders in our employ, Johns Hopkins knows that adequate investments in Maryland’s transportation system are critical to the economic competitiveness and livelihood of our state and region. Our employees, students, patients, and community members rely on public transit to get to and from work, campus, or around the region. Unfortunately, however, the service currently offered by MTA is inadequate to meet those needs. This legislation is necessary to study and make recommendations on a governance structure that would better support the entire system.

Johns Hopkins urges the Budget and Taxation Committee to take action to advance Baltimore and the State of Maryland’s transit future by issuing a **favorable report on SB465**.