



**Testimony Presented to the House Appropriations Committee
SBO465 - Transportation – Commission to Study Establishing a Baltimore Regional Transit Authority**

Sponsor: Senator Washington

Position: Favorable

This testimony is submitted by the members of the Baltimore Metropolitan Council’s Transit Governance and Funding Workgroup (TGFW). The TGFW was appointed by the Baltimore Metropolitan Council’s Board of Directors to identify meaningful recommendations to develop a more effective and inclusive regional transit system in the Baltimore region.

The TGFW met from August through December, 2022. We are pleased to support SB0465 which directly reflects one of the recommendations from our report published in January 2023.

The Maryland Transit Administration (MTA) is the nation’s only large transit agency that is not governed by a board, commission or council. Over time, this structure has allowed for little accountability; fostered disinvestment in the system; and allowed for the cancellation of the Red Line with no input from the residents and local governments of the Baltimore region.

Further, the lack of coordination between state and local government plans regarding transit, land use, economic development - and even traffic operations - have resulted in a system that is not aligned with providing convenient and equitable connections for riders to regional job centers, schools, recreational activities and healthcare facilities.

One of the options for improving transit in the Baltimore region is the creation of an independent transit authority to manage mass transit – separate from MTA and MDOT. The creation of a Baltimore Regional Transit Authority has been the subject of conversation since the cancellation of the Red Line.

While an independent authority offers many benefits, there are complex questions that must be explored and answered before undertaking such a substantial step. Issues such as financial considerations, current labor and service contracts, ownership of physical assets, board structure must be considered before determining whether any gained benefits are worth the potential risks and costs.



SB0465 is the definitive study of whether the Baltimore region should have an independent transit authority. This study will be complete in the fall of 2024 and the legislature and Governor will be able to act on any recommendations in the 2025 legislative term.

We strongly encourage **FAVORABLE** reports for **SB0465**. Thank you for your consideration.

BMC TRANSIT GOVERNANCE AND FUNDING WORKGROUP MEMBERS

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