
March 2, 2023

The Honorable Kumar P. Barve
Chair, House Environment and Transportation Committee
Room 251, House Office Building
Annapolis MD 21401

Re: Letter of Support – House Bill 1049 – Transportation - Assaults on Public Transit Operators - Report

Dear Chair Barve and Committee Members:

The Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) supports House Bill 1049 as it would highlight the risks that public transit operators encounter and may lead to increased protections for those that provide vital services to this State.

House Bill 1049 requires the Maryland Transit Administration (MTA) to submit an annual report on assaults on public transit operators, by December 1st of each year. The report must include data for MTA, the Washington Metropolitan Transit Authority (WMATA), and political subdivisions and must be submitted to each local executive authority, the State's Attorney for each county, and specified committees of the General Assembly. MTA currently collects the information outlined in House Bill 1049 and is eager to share the data to a broader audience.

MTA is grateful for the service of our dedicated men and women who operate our buses, light rail, metro subway, MARC, and mobility vehicles. Transit operators drive our children to school each day, transport the vulnerable to medical appointments, and ensure that the essential workers of our State safely arrive at their place of employment on time. The recent COVID-19 pandemic has only further highlighted the vital nature of their work.

Since 2013, an average of 50 assaults against MTA operators are reported each year. In the past three years, MTA and WMATA have lost several operators to gun violence while in the course of delivering essential service to the public. Not only are these incidents an assault on our operators, they are an assault to the public's right to safe and reliable transportation. MTA believes that all assaults committed against all public transit operators are reprehensible and that information about these acts should be readily accessible to all jurisdictions of our State.

For these reasons, the Maryland Department of Transportation respectfully requests that the Committee grant House Bill 1049 a favorable report.

Respectfully submitted,

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