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March 1, 2023

The Honorable William C. Smith, Jr.  
Chair, Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee  
2 East, Miller Senate Office Building  
Annapolis MD 21401

***Re: Letter of Support – Senate Bill 693 – Transportation - Assaults on Public Transit Operators - Report***

Dear Chair Smith and Committee Members:

The Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) supports Senate Bill 693 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.

Senate Bill 693 requires the Maryland Transit Administration (MTA) to submit an annual report on assaults on public transit operators, by December 1<sup>st</sup> 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 Senate Bill 693 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 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 Senate Bill 693 a favorable report.

Respectfully submitted,

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