



Maryland Metro Funding Act of 2024 (HB 198)

Testimony of Samuel Jordan – Baltimore Transit Equity Coalition

Favorable

Thank you, Mr. Chair, Mr. Vice Chair and Members of the Appropriations Committee. I am Samuel Jordan – President of the Baltimore Transit Equity Coalition (BTEC). We urge the Committee to issue a favorable report for bill HB 198, the Maryland Metro Funding Act of 2024.

The intricacies of the funding of the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) require plain speech to convey our concern for the Authority's fiscal strength and stability. BTEC testified in 2018 before this Committee in favor of the \$167 million annual subsidy to WMATA assessed on each of the member jurisdictions. Your report was favorable.

HB 198 is a legislative work-around. It seeks to reconcile current statutory limitations governing WMATA's 3% annual operating subsidy cap with the realities of the reduced COVID pandemic and post-COVID funding support available to Maryland, Virginia, the District of Columbia, and Congress.

In order to contribute critical funds to support WMATA, Maryland must spend \$150 million in fiscal years 2025 and 2026. \$250 million is projected for fiscal year 2027. Each expenditure exceeds the existing statutory operating cap. By shifting the baseline contribution to fiscal year 2026, the operating cap would be applied to a new, higher level of annual increases which would then be subject to the 3% limit.

With such a legislative work-around, Marylanders can continue to use METRO in the hundreds of thousands each day and be confident that their commutes are safe, reliable, convenient, and increasingly equitable. That is BTEC's objective in support of the Maryland Metro Funding Act of 2024 as we seek your favorable report. Thank you.

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