



GREATER WASHINGTON
Board of Trade

SB0126 – Metro Funding Act of 2024
Senate Budget and Taxation Committee
Position: **FAVORABLE**
Greater Washington Board of Trade
January 23rd, 2024

Dear Chairman Guzzone and Committee Members.

The Greater Washington Board of Trade is a pro-business and non-partisan organization supporting all industry sectors in the District of Columbia, suburban Maryland, and Northern Virginia, having done so for the last 134 years. We support SB 0126.

The Board of Trade is committed to the long-term viability of the Metro system, which serves as our region's most critical asset for equitable economic growth and mobility. It is a key factor in attracting both private sector investment as well as growing and retaining the region's exceptional workforce.

While WMATA is facing a significant budget shortfall, they are not unique. Most major transit systems throughout the country are facing similar budget challenges post-pandemic. WMATA does, however, have unique long-standing challenges due to its multi-jurisdictional nature and establishment without a dedicated source of funding. This, combined with a federal workforce which has not returned to the office, the conclusion of federal COVID relief funding, the suspension of the 3% increases of the jurisdictional subsidy credit for two years during the pandemic, and the growing costs of providing current levels of service, has resulted in WMATA's financial position and necessitates this legislation.

WMATA has taken steps to help rectify the situation over the course of the last year under the leadership of General Manager Randy Clarke. Having identified over \$100 million in one time savings on top of roughly \$600 million in cost savings identified over the next 10 years. We believe WMATA will continue its efforts to run more efficiently and effectively moving forward.

We would also like to note that this is a bi-partisan issue, as we have seen Governor Youngkin in Virginia include a mechanism for additional operating assistance for WMATA in his proposed budget, the exact intent of this legislation. The Board of Trade will continue to advocate for additional subsidies from our other regional partners to come to fruition.

With the population of Greater Washington expected to grow by 1.5 million people, to include 1 million new jobs, by 2050, a safe, reliable, and frequent transit service is necessary to the health and long-term growth of our region and its economy.

For these reasons, the Greater Washington Board of Trade respectfully respects your support for SB0126.