



Maryland Transit Opportunities Coalition

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Maryland Metro Funding Act of 2024 (SB 126)
Testimony to Senate Budget & Taxation Committee
Favorable

The Maryland Transit Opportunities Coalition, a state-wide coalition of transit advocates, transit riders, and transit workers, strongly supports enactment of SB 126.

The Metro system is the foundation of the Washington area’s economic vitality and livability. It is especially important to the economy of Montgomery and Prince George’s counties. The College Park, Silver Spring, Bethesda, New Carrollton, Twinbrook and White Flint Metro stations are surrounded by new commercial and residential buildings.

What attracts businesses and residents to these areas is the ease of travel without a car. Frequent Metro service on rail and bus is an essential element of that lifestyle. Metro’s return to frequent, reliable service under the leadership of Randy Clarke is already drawing back riders lost during the difficult decade of the 2010s and the Covid pandemic. Failure to pass this bill would bring severe cutbacks in Metro service, wiping out one of Maryland’s greatest competitive advantages.

The essential purpose of this bill is to fix a bureaucratic accident. Federal Covid aid for WMATA, which was intended to help bridge shortfalls in both fare revenues and state government tax revenues, all went directly to the agency. That reset the baseline for the 3% increase in state funding at an artificially low level. Now that the Covid crisis has passed, the baseline should be reset to normal levels.

We urge you to give this bill favorable consideration.