



March 18, 2024

The Honorable William C. Smith  
Chair, Judicial Proceedings  
Committee  
Maryland State Senate  
Miller Senate Office Building  
Annapolis, MD 21401

The Honorable Marc Korman  
Chair, Environment and  
Transportation Committee  
Maryland House of Delegates  
House Office Building  
Annapolis, MD 21401

Dear Chairmen Smith and Korman:

On behalf of the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA), I thank you and your respective committees for the collective leadership in advancing the Better Bus Service Act of 2024 (SB943 and HB107).

These bills are not in identical form, and as your committees work on bills that have crossed over, I hope the final version of the Better Bus Service Act of 2024 can be improved.

As amended, SB943 would allow vehicles to make brief stops in dedicated bus lanes for picking up and dropping off passengers. Fundamentally, blocking a bus lane for such purposes, and requiring a bus to move in and out of the adjacent lane of traffic, is less safe and less efficient for all traffic. A better solution is for jurisdictions to create designated pick up/dropoff zones or for motorists to use an intersecting street for such stops.

Metro has reviewed whether we could implement a bus lane monitoring system that could account for vehicles picking up or dropping off passengers. There are drawbacks to any solution we could implement:

**Option 1:** Human reviewers at a local jurisdiction's enforcing department would examine each video and try to determine if passengers are embarking/disembarking from car. However, this would be a difficult judgement call to make and would open the program up to citizen complaint. This solution is also not cost effective for the locality.

**Option 2:** The Clear Lanes system could use a "5-minute" or similar business rule that would require cars to be observed by two buses with Clear Lanes equipment within a certain amount a time. However, this option has two drawbacks.

1. Option 2 allows cars to continue to block and slow down buses. Metro's highest-frequency routes in Maryland arrive every 12 minutes,

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A District of Columbia,  
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Transit Partnership

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essentially allowing motorists to park in bus lanes for 12 to 23 minutes without recording a violation.

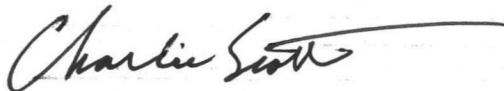
2. It requires dedicated bus fleets that are 100% camera-equipped on Maryland routes, which increases capital and operating costs for the program.

For these reasons, I urge your committees to approve the Better Bus Service Act of 2024 without a provision to allow passenger pick up and dropoff in dedicated bus lanes.

Additionally, as I have testified, inclusion of bus stop enforcement in the Better Bus Service Act of 2024 is of significant importance to customers with visual impairments or other mobility needs. Enforcement of bus stops and bike lanes is provided in SB943 and I encourage those provisions to remain in any final bill.

If I or my colleagues can be of any assistance as your committees consider this legislation, please let me know. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Charlie Scott  
Senior Government Relations Officer