
March 20, 2024

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

***RE: Letter of Information – Senate Bill 70 – Transportation – Change in Bus Service
Impacts Report***

Dear Chair Korman and Committee Members:

The Maryland Department of Transportation offers the following information on Senate Bill 70 for the Committee's consideration.

As amended, Senate Bill 70 would require the Maryland Transit Administration (MTA) to compile a report on the impacts of a proposed service change of an existing bus route or the corresponding paratransit service area, prior to announcing any service reduction or cancellation of that route. The report is to be published at least 30 days prior to holding a public hearing on the change and is to be shared with the Secretary of Transportation, Presiding Officers, Senate Finance Committee, House Environment and Transportation Committee, and each member of the General Assembly whose district would be impacted by the proposed service change.

The MTA regularly implements service changes to Core Bus service to ensure the complex system adapts to our passengers' changing travel needs and provides the best possible service with the resources available. The Fall Service Change is when major alignment and schedule changes are done to the network. When considering bus stop and route changes, MTA follows a ten-step process which considers factors such as race, income, and other socioeconomic variables to ensure no inadvertent impacts occur as relates to frequency and duration of service. This process includes an analysis of existing conditions, engagement with advisory groups and the public, and a service equity analysis. MTA develops a Riders Guide describing all proposed changes before public hearings are held. This information is provided on MTA's website and in print.

House Bill 9/Senate Bill 19 (2023) requires that, prior to holding a public hearing on a proposed service change, the MTA publish on its website an evaluation of the demographics of the riders of the routes and the service area; after completing public hearings, MTA is required to publish on its website a transportation equity analysis, cost-benefit analysis, and compile a report on the impacts of the proposed service change. The report is to be made public, as well as be submitted to the members of the Board of Public Works, the Attorney General, the Secretary of Transportation, any elected officials whose district would be impacted by the proposed service change, any community leaders consulted during the community outreach process, as well as the

The Honorable Marc Korman
Page Two

Presiding Officers, Senate Finance Committee, and the House Environment and Transportation Committee. The MTA is prepared to implement House Bill 9/Senate Bill 19 on July 1, 2024, when the law goes into effect.

In addition to what MTA will be required by law to report on, Senate Bill 70 would require an additional report on the following: the schools and types of businesses in the service area, monthly ridership of the route and the effect the service change would have on commutes, the effect on the corresponding paratransit service area and the paratransit riders impacted, a description of the contents of any minutes, records, or documents related to the change, and a brief statement explaining the reason for the change. It should be noted that MTA would only be able to compile this additional information, as it pertains to only those service changes that require public hearings, defined under MTA's Title VI Major Service Change Policy. MTA implements minor service changes throughout the year, and these do not require public hearings. Additionally, the MTA seeks clarification that only public documentation or minutes would be required. It should be noted that Senate Bill 70 now requires a report prior to public hearings, as well as current law that goes into effect July 1, 2024, which requires a similar report to be submitted after the public hearing process.

The Maryland Department of Transportation respectfully requests that the Committee consider this information when deliberating Senate Bill 70.

Respectfully submitted,

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