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March 13, 2024

The Honorable Pamela Beidle  
Chair, Senate Finance Committee  
3 East, Miller Senate Office Building  
Annapolis Maryland 21401

***RE: Letter of Information – Senate Bill 891 – Transportation – MobilityLink Paratransit Service Improvements – Study***

Dear Chair Beidle and Committee Members:

The Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) offers the following information on Senate Bill 891 for the Committee’s consideration.

Senate Bill 891 would require the Maryland Transportation Institute at the University of Maryland to conduct a study on the Maryland Transit Administration’s (MTA) Mobility paratransit service, with a report due by July 1, 2025.

The MTA operates Mobility paratransit, which is a specialized transit service available to those who, because of a functional or cognitive disability, are unable to get to a bus stop, wait unassisted at a stop or station or board or ride a bus or train by themselves. Mobility is a shared ride door-to-door service, which is federally required to operate within three-quarters of a mile radius of MTA’s fixed route service.

The MTA recognizes the critical service that Mobility provides to riders. To understand existing and future needs, the MTA will be undertaking an internal study of Mobility, including but not limited to six key tasks: the collection and review of existing information, interviews with Mobility riders and MTA staff, defining existing conditions, updating service strategies, ridership and fleet forecasting, and developing a fleet and operations management plan. As a result, MTA will be producing a 10-year projection on ridership and staffing levels needed to operate Mobility services, as well as determining information on system improvements and any necessary vehicle replacements. MTA would be happy to add the requirements of this bill to the existing study. MTA is currently expecting work to begin Spring 2024, with work completed in Fall 2024.

Additionally, MTA is currently engaged in discussions with the United States Department of Justice (DoJ) to resolve a service complaint and DoJ letter finding noncompliance. As a result of these discussions, the MTA would request to be the responsible party for conducting a study on Mobility improvements. The agency is committed to continuous improvements for our paratransit riders and believes that MTA is best situated to complete the study.

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The Maryland Department of Transportation respectfully requests that the Committee consider this information when deliberating Senate Bill 891.

Respectfully submitted,

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