



Statement of the Amalgamated Transit Union (ATU) Local 689

SB 766– Fair Share for Maryland Act of 2024

February 21st, 2024

TO: The Honorable Guy Guzzone and Members of the Budget and Taxation Committee

FROM: Matthew Girardi, Political & Communications Director, ATU Local 689

ATU Local 689 supports SB 766 and urges the Senate Budget and Taxation Committee to issue a favorable report. This bill is a necessary, fair, and progressive measure for ensuring fiscal stability in the state of Maryland.

At Local 689, we represent over 15,000 transit workers and retirees throughout the Washington DC Metro Area performing many skilled transportation crafts for the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA), MetroAccess, DASH, and DC Streetcar among others. Our union helped turn low-wage, exploitative transit jobs into transit careers. We became an engine for the middle-class of this region.

Even as our region has faced unprecedented challenges over the past few years, transit workers have faithfully stayed on the job and kept our region afloat. They showed up every day even through the worst pandemic in a century and spikes in violence both towards themselves and their riders. They are friends, neighbors, and pillars of the community around this region. However, these frontline heroes are today in danger.

Going into Fiscal Year 2025, Maryland is facing proposed cuts for vital transportation infrastructure including WMATA, commuter bus systems, MTA, and more. The budget, and the Transportation Trust Fund alike are structurally unbalanced, with the problem getting worse the longer the state waits. It would be beyond cruel to have our members repaid for all their hard work with pink slips, frozen wages, or stolen retirements. Likewise, we know that in the state of Maryland, multi-billionaires are still paying less in taxes than our members or even the most vulnerable riders we serve. The Union finds this to be an unacceptable fiscal stance.

The Fair Share for Maryland Act is a smart way to close corporate loopholes, increase taxes on the ultra-rich, and give working families a needed tax cut. Everyone is just starting to get over inflation. This would put money back in the pockets of the working families hit hardest by inflation. Likewise, it would directly raise over \$1.6 billion for vital programs be them schools, housing, transportation, and more. In short, it ensures that the state's budget is not balanced on the backs of working class people.

The Union thanks Senators Hettleman, Rosapepe, Washington, and Lewis Young for introducing this worthy measure and urges the committee to issue a favorable report.