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MAYOR

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HB0450

February 25, 2025

TO: Members of the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee

FROM: Nina Themelis, Director of Mayor's Office of Government Relations

RE: HB 450 - Maryland Transit Administration - Disability Reduced Fare Program - Renewal for Permanently Disabled Individuals

POSITION: Support

Chair Barnes, Vice Chair Chang, and Members of the Committee, please be advised that the Baltimore City Administration (BCA) respectfully requests a **favorable** committee report on House Bill (HB) 450 - Maryland Transit Administration - Disability Reduced Fare Program - Renewal for Permanently Disabled Individuals.

HB 450 requires that the Maryland Transit Administration (MTA) automatically renew the certification of a person eligible for the MTA's Disability Reduced Fare Program when such person is qualified for it by virtue of a permanent disability. This would make the program more accessible and eliminate the need for renewal for individuals whose disability status is unlikely to change.

At present, the certification process administered by the MTA, which requires an application with a verification by a healthcare professional, is good for a maximum of three years. The burden to file for new approval to the MTA's Disability Reduced Fare Program is redundant in the case of a person whose disability has already been verified as permanent. This change will therefore achieve two beneficial outcomes to the state and its residents: ensuring the benefit is more easily accessible and available those who are entitled to it and reduce the number of renewal applications MTA must review. To this end, HB 450 would not only eliminate the burden individuals living with permanent disabilities face when trying to utilize this program, but also reduce the administrative burden experienced by the MTA.

Due of the above reasons, The Baltimore City Administration respectfully requests a **favorable** committee report on House Bill 450.