

Testimony on SB 384
Metro Funding Modification Act of 2025
Senate Budget & Taxation Committee

Date: January 27, 2025

Position: SUPPORT

The Coalition for Smarter Growth supports **SB 384**. Our organization advocates for walkable, bikeable, inclusive, and transit-oriented communities as the most sustainable and equitable way for the Washington, DC region to grow and provide opportunities for all.

The **Metro Funding Modification Act** will ensure that critical tri-state capital funding for WMATA is adjusted for inflation, contingent on similar commitments by the District of Columbia and Virginia. The WMATA rail, bus and paratransit systems are foundations of the economy and community livability of the Maryland suburbs of Washington, DC.

WMATA has made significant progress in addressing its infrastructure and equipment state of good repair needs, thanks to the 2018 deal reached by Maryland, the District of Columbia and Virginia to provide \$500 million annually in dedicated capital funding. However, this was not indexed to inflation, and WMATA's lost purchasing power threatens to increase the deferred maintenance backlog in coming years.

WMATA service today is faster, more frequent, and more reliable because of the three states' investment in WMATA. WMATA strategic planning, maintenance, transparency, and communications are much improved, ridership is bouncing back strongly, and customer satisfaction is at an all time high. Our Metro has also made our region more economically competitive by attracting and retaining cutting edge companies and next generation employees. Vacancy rates for offices near Metro are significantly lower than in office parks, reflecting the desirability of Metro station locations.

However, without timely action by the State of Maryland (and its partners DC and Virginia), inadequate capital funding for Metro will result in declining service reliability, worsening customer experience, and increased safety risk. These risks threaten worker commutes, transit-oriented business centers in Montgomery and Prince George's, and household affordability that underpin the economy and make these areas desirable places.

Maryland can be a regional leader by passing **SB 384**, making the common sense step of indexing existing dedicated state Metro capital funding to inflation.

We ask for a **favorable report for SB 384** by the committee. Thank you.