



P.O. Box 278
Riverdale, MD 20738

Committee: Budget and Taxation

Testimony on: SB 384, Metro Funding Modification Act of 2025

Position: Support

Hearing Date: January 29, 2025

The Maryland Chapter of the Sierra Club supports the Metro Funding Modification Act of 2025. SB 384 would alter the calculation of the amount that the Governor is required to include in the annual state budget each year to provide funding for the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA). The bill is contingent on Washington, D.C. and Virginia upholding their commitments to Metro funding.

Currently, WMATA's operating subsidy is capped at a maximum of 3% increase per year, pushed by Virginia as a part of the 2018 capital funding deal. This cap has not worked for many reasons, including 1) high inflation which raised system costs and 2) WMATA's provision of credits to the compact jurisdictions, which lowered the baseline from which subsidy increases were calculated.

Last year, the 3% cap was temporarily repealed by the Maryland General Assembly in order to avoid catastrophic cuts to Metro services. Going forward, SB 384 will allow Maryland to close any WMATA operating funding gaps that are greater than 3%, although separate efforts are needed to ensure stable, dedicated sources of funding – for WMATA, as well as for other public transit systems across the state, including the Maryland Transit Administration and Locally Operated Transit Systems (LOTS).

WMATA has been one of the leading transit agencies in the country in its rebound from the COVID-19 pandemic. In 2024, overall Metro ridership increased more than 12%, with more than 250 million passenger trips. Metrorail customer satisfaction reached its highest recorded level at 88%. A high level of service is critical to support transit-oriented economic development in Montgomery and Prince George's Counties and to meet the state's climate goals.

For these reasons, Metro requires consistent operating funding that keeps up with rising costs to continue building upon its many recent successes. The state's investment decisions in WMATA should not be held back by the arbitrary 3% funding increase cap. We urge you to give a favorable report to SB 384.

Jane Lyons-Raeder
Chair, Transportation Committee
janelyons@gmail.com

Josh Tulkin
Chapter Director
Josh.Tulkin@MDSierra.org

Founded in 1892, the Sierra Club is America's oldest and largest grassroots environmental organization. The Maryland Chapter has over 70,000 members and supporters, and the Sierra Club nationwide has over 800,000 members and nearly four million supporters.