



Statement of the Amalgamated Transit Union (ATU) Local 689

SB 384– Metro Funding Modification Act of 2025

January 27th, 2025

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 strongly supports SB 384 and urges the Senate Budget and Taxation Committee to issue a favorable report. This bill is a necessary measure for ensuring the stability of the State of Maryland and the whole Washington DC metropolitan region by allowing for necessary funds to flow to WMATA for its capital program.

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.

Likewise, 9,000 of our members are hardworking WMATA employees. Going into this past fiscal year, Metro stated that it faces an estimated \$750 million gap on the operating side. Had that need gone unmet, proposals were floated where 108 of the 135 Metrobus routes would have been eliminated or cut; where Metrorail would have run less frequently and less often with entire stations being shuttered; where fares would have increased 25%; and where over 2,300 full time jobs would have been cut, including highly demanded CDL drivers. Thankfully, this body and the whole Government of Maryland prioritized rebaselining its share of operations funding.

Unfortunately, even with the additional infusion of funds, all the regional partners did not collectively decide to entirely fill the gap. This meant that Metro borrowed over tens of millions of dollars of preventative maintenance funds to plug holes in its operations budget. That, in turn, has accelerated the pace at which an expected deficit in the capital budget will come to pass. It was only a few years ago that we had people questioning the safety and reliability of Metro. The deal that was made to give the authority dedicated funding for capital expenditures was a game changer, allowing for needed updates to stations, railcars, the bus fleet, and more. Maryland must not allow for that progress to all waste away.

This bill is a commonsense measure to rebaseline the dedicated funding on the capital side, contingent on the District of Columbia and Virginia also doing so. This, in turn, prevents Metro from effectively seeing a cut with the price increases over the past few years. After all, Covid-related inflation meant that effectively, Maryland and the whole region has indexed WMATA to a world and a rate that no longer exists.

We thank Senator Augustine for introducing this necessary measure and urge the committee to issue a favorable report.