



**BILL:** HB0386 - Metro Funding Modification Act of 2026

**POSITION:** Favorable

**DATE:** February 10, 2026

**COMMITTEE:** House Appropriations Committee

**SUBMITTED BY:** Jack McDougle, President and CEO, Greater Washington Board of Trade

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### WRITTEN TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT

My name is Jack McDougle, and I am President and CEO of the Greater Washington Board of Trade. Founded in 1889, the Board of Trade is the region's leading business organization, bringing together employers, civic leaders, and other key stakeholders to advance inclusive economic growth and regional competitiveness.

We are in strong support of SB0281 / HB0386, the Metro Funding Modification Act of 2026, and we commend Maryland's continued leadership in sustaining a safe, reliable, and regionally coordinated Metro system. This legislation is an important step in ensuring that our region's core transit infrastructure remains a competitive asset that supports economic growth, workforce access, and long-term fiscal sustainability.

Greater Washington remains one of the most congested regions in the country, a challenge intensified by the transformation of the federal government and the rise of disruptive technologies. These forces are reshaping where and how people work, redefining talent markets, and increasing the urgency of investing in modern, high-performing transit. Mobility is no longer simply a transportation issue; it is a fundamental economic and quality-of-life imperative. The cost of inaction is steep: congestion drains billions in productivity, constrains business growth, and weakens our ability to compete for talent and investment.

The Board of Trade supports the approach taken in this legislation to strengthen predictability, accountability, and regional coordination in the funding of the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority. The bill appropriately reinforces shared responsibility by conditioning Maryland's investment on comparable commitments from regional partners, while improving how capital grant amounts are calculated and incorporated into the State budget. These provisions reflect the reality that Metro is a regional system whose long-term success depends on coordinated action across Maryland, Virginia, and the District of Columbia.

Over the past 18 months, the Board of Trade actively participated in the DMV Moves regional process, working alongside business leaders, labor, and public-interest organizations to develop consensus recommendations on Metro's long-term capital funding and accountability framework. Those discussions reinforced a clear conclusion: sustained, dedicated capital funding paired with strong oversight is essential to maintaining safety, state of good repair, and system modernization, especially signaling and automated train operations (ATO).



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Metro's capital needs are substantial and ongoing. Funding certainty enables long-term planning, efficient project delivery, and continued progress on railcar procurement, bus garage reconstruction, escalator and station reinvestments, railyard upgrades, and other systemwide improvements. At the same time, employers and taxpayers rightly expect transparency and measurable performance which are goals this legislation advances.

From an economic standpoint, Metro is a critical engine for Maryland. Thousands of Metro employees live in the state, and the capital program supports jobs, small and disadvantaged businesses, and economic activity throughout Maryland. Reliable transit expands access to employment, reduces congestion on state roadways, and underpins the competitiveness of the Greater Washington economy.

As policymakers consider broader revenue and funding questions, we encourage evaluating options through a regional competitiveness lens. Funding mechanisms should be assessed for their impacts on job creation, business location decisions, and the long-term strength of the tax base that ultimately supports transit investment. Approaches that inadvertently discourage high-growth sectors or reduce the region's attractiveness for investment risk undermining the economic benefits that improved transit is intended to deliver.

The Metro Funding Modification Act of 2026 represents a balanced, forward-looking approach that reinforces accountability, strengthens regional partnership, and provides the stability Metro needs to continue improving safety, reliability, and performance.

For these reasons, the Greater Washington Board of Trade respectfully urges the Committee to issue a favorable report on SB0281 / HB0386.

Thank you for your consideration.