



**MONTGOMERY COUNTY COUNCIL
ROCKVILLE, MARYLAND**

KATE STEWART
COUNCILMEMBER
MONTGOMERY COUNTY COUNCIL

February 10, 2026

TO: The Honorable Ben Barnes
Chair, Appropriations Committee

FROM: Kate Stewart
Montgomery County Councilmember, District 4

RE: House Bill 386, *Metro Funding Modification Act of 2026* - Support

My name is Kate Stewart and I serve as the Montgomery County Councilmember for District 4. I am writing on behalf of myself in support of House Bill 386 - *Metro Funding Modification Act of 2026*.

It is vital that members of the General Assembly support this legislation to assist in creating sustainable funding for the WMATA system to ensure it continues to serve our residents and power our regional economy.

WMATA is fundamental to our regional economy. Our residents who live and work here, customers who visit our small local businesses, and commuters to Washington D.C. all rely on our Metro system. Much of our local economy and land use are centered around Metrorail and Metrobus stops served with frequent, safe, reliable public transit service. The Metrobus system moves even more riders than the Metrorail system, primarily on major routes along our State Highways that disproportionately serve and benefit residents who lack their own vehicle, and residents with lower incomes. The entire system has had the strongest ridership growth since COVID of any major transit system in the country.

This bill also conditions the funding on safeguards for the personnel who operate the system, including Marylanders, as the system prepares for its future. For all these reasons, we must keep strong momentum going, advancing our reliable, world-class transit system with a clear message sent by the funding commitment described in this bill.

As a former board chair of the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (COG) and a member of the DMVMoves task force, I have had the privilege to work with regional leaders in Virginia and Washington, D.C. and WMATA to map a way forward for a sustainable future for WMATA. The Montgomery County Council also passed a resolution in support of the DMVMoves task force recommendations. A commitment from Maryland is needed at this time.

Without this bill, we risk losing ground to our regional competitors and increasing congestion on our roadways. New state leadership in Virginia is watching closely to see what signal Maryland sends with its commitment to this system.

Thank you for your consideration as we continue working together to support all our communities in the national capital region.