



# **WASHINGTON METROPOLITAN AREA TRANSIT AUTHORITY**

## **Public Testimony in Support of SB 281**

### **Metro Funding Modification Act of 2025**

#### **Before the Senate Budget and Taxation Committee**

**February 2, 2026**

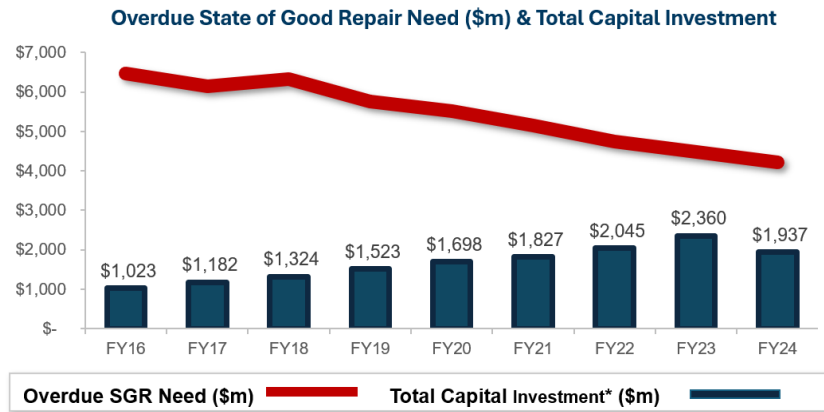
Mr. Chairman, members of the committee, thank you for allowing me to testify today. For the record, my name is Charlie Scott, and I am the Acting Senior Vice President for Government Relations for the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA). I am here to urge your strong support for Senate Bill 281.

On behalf of the 13,000 employees and our Board of Directors I want to thank Senator Augustine for his steadfast support of public transit across our state, and particularly in the National Capital Region.

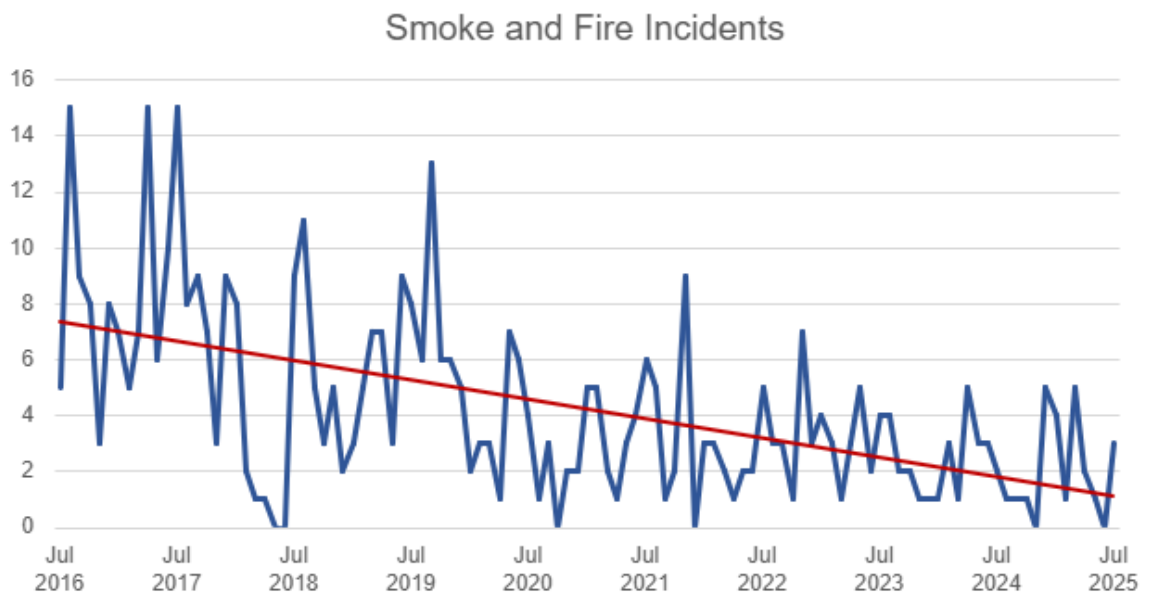
The Maryland Metro/Transit Funding Act passed by the General Assembly in 2018 has been critical to returning our Metro system to a state of good repair; the difference is night and day. With our annual capital program now exceeding \$2 billion, in the past seven years we have made significant progress to address a backlog of capital needs that had built up over decades, due to a lack of dedicated capital funding. The result for our customers and the region is a safer, more reliable system, with improved on-time performance and the customer satisfaction that comes with it. Specifically, that funding, coupled with a dedicated team at Metro, has supported:

- Industry-leading ridership growth. We delivered over 264 million trips in FY25, a 9 percent increase over FY24.
- Approximately 90 percent on-time Metrorail performance every day, making Metro a service that our customers can rely on.
- A return to automated train control and design speeds, reducing run times and generating savings that we reinvested right back into service.
- 75% of rail customer trips have 6-minute service or better, compared to 52% of customer trips six years ago. On bus, we have significantly expanded our frequent service network; half of our customer trips have 12-minute bus service or better.
- And a safer Metro system - crime on our system is at an all-time low; new fare gates have reduced fare evasion 82% on rail, while Transit Police officers on rail and bus are deterring crime and making riders feel more secure.

The success Metro is achieving today would not have been possible without the financial stability afforded by the 2018 legislation.

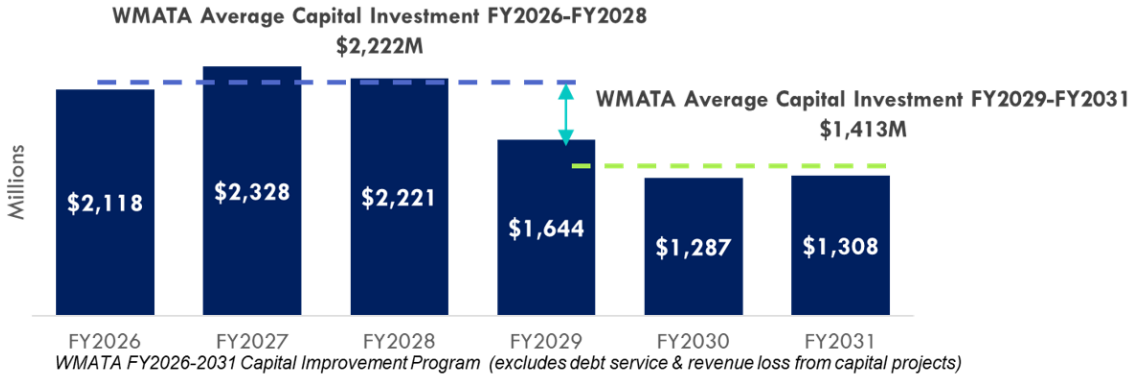


At the time of the legislation’s passing in 2018, Metro Rail service was severely impacted by service disruptions directly related to the deteriorating physical conditions of the system. Smoke and fire incidents, while just one indicator of the investment backlog, were highly visible to the public. The 75% reduction in these incidents is just one example of how this funding has improved the safety and reliability of the Metro system.

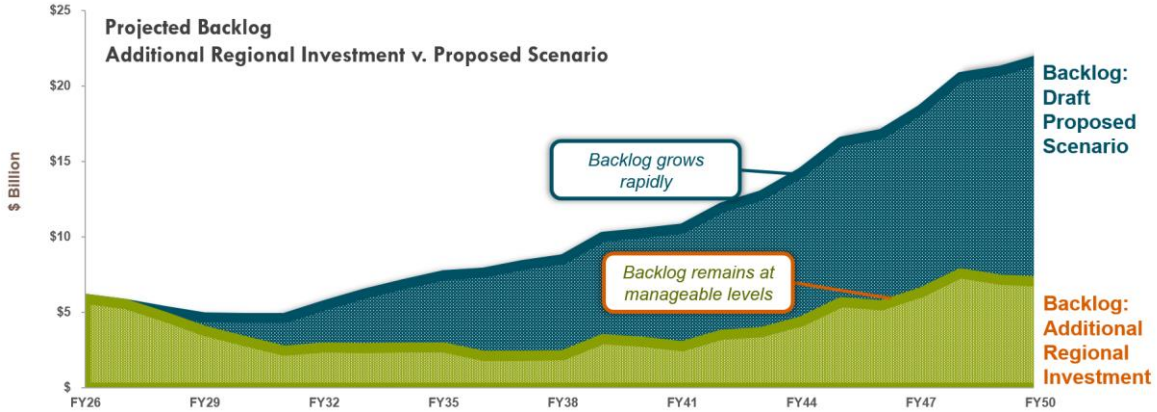


With a static funding level of \$500 million, and a growing portion of the funding now allocated to debt service, the 2018 plan also envisioned that the resulting bond capacity would hit its ceiling within approximately 14 years – by 2032. But much has changed in our world since 2018. Impacts of soaring inflation and the transfer

of some capital funds to the operating budget to address post-COVID operating shortfalls have put pressure on our long-term capital program. Original projections of an FY32 funding cliff have now been accelerated with our debt capacity being reached in FY29. The result is a reduction in our average capital spending from \$2.2B to \$1.4B starting in FY29.



Without a new, regional funding solution, this reduction in our capital program will reverse the significant progress made over the past seven years, with the state of good repair backlog growing, and our capital program reverting from a proactive to a reactive maintenance posture.

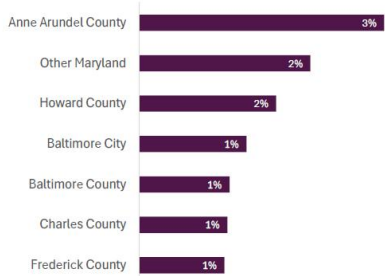


The most acute impacts of reduced reliability would be felt by residents of the National Capital region – not only by Metro customers, but also by daily car commuters who could see increased traffic congestion. However, the benefits of WMATA investments extend throughout all of Maryland, well beyond Prince George’s and Montgomery Counties. Marylanders across the state connect to Metro on a daily basis, as demonstrated by the map below.

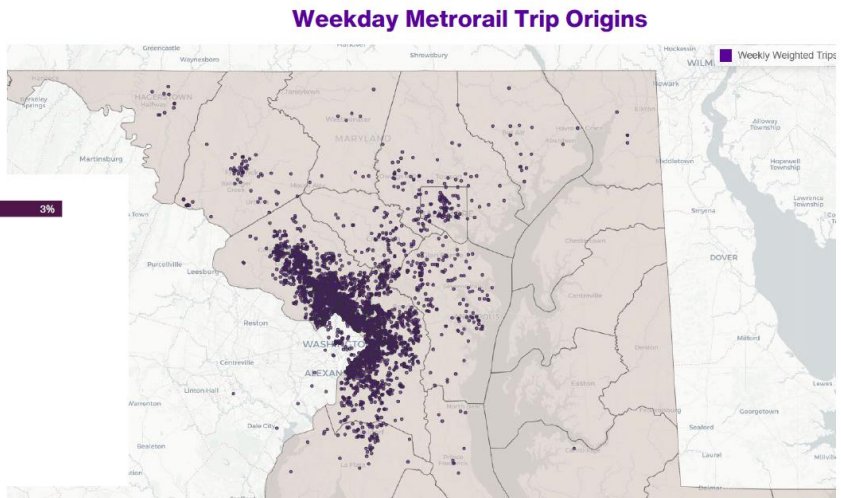
# Metro serves Maryland residents beyond the Compact area

Dots represent trip origins comprising more than 20 weekly trips

Non-compact jurisdictions are 11% of weekday Maryland trips



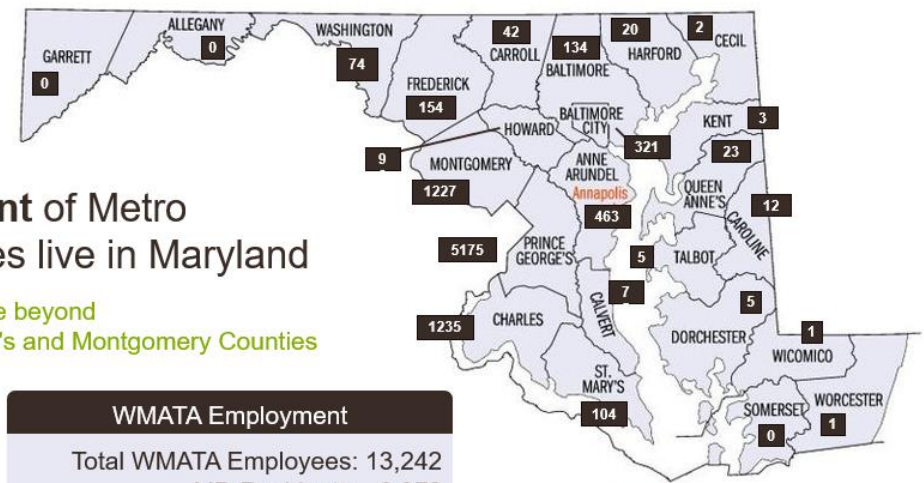
Data sources: 2022 Metrorail passenger survey



Additionally, WMATA is a major employer in Maryland, with over 9,000 of our 13,000 employees living in the state. Here again, our reach extends well beyond Montgomery and Prince George's Counties, with almost 3,000 employees residing in other parts of our state.

**71 percent** of Metro employees live in Maryland

**22 percent** live beyond Prince George's and Montgomery Counties



**WMATA Employment**  
 Total WMATA Employees: 13,242  
 MD Residents: 9,372

# WMATA Employee Residents Per County

Metro's capital program has also spurred manufacturing jobs here in Maryland. Our 7000-series railcar order led Knorr Brake to build a new manufacturing facility, adding 200 jobs to its presence in Westminster. Knorr is also a supplier for our 8000-series railcar order, which resulted in Hitachi Rail constructing a new manufacturing and assembly facility in Hagerstown, supporting 1,300 regional jobs including 460 at the new facility. This economic activity, enabled by sustained

funding for Metro's capital program, is an essential part of what makes Maryland a desirable place to live, visit, and do business.

To sustain the progress we have made rebuilding Metro, to continue our role fostering Maryland's economy, and to continue moving Marylanders, I urge this committee to provide a favorable report.