



Statement of the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (COG)

SB281 – Metro Funding Modification Act of 2026

January 30, 2026

TO: The Honorable Chair Guy Guzzone and Members of the Budget and Taxation Committee
FROM: Clark Mercer, Executive Director
Monica Beyrouti Nunez, Government Relations Manager

On behalf of the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (COG), we are writing to offer our support for the Metro Funding Modification Act of 2026 (SB281) sponsored by Senator Malcolm Augustine and urge the Committee to issue a favorable report. We thank Senator Augustine for introducing this necessary legislation and commend Maryland for being a leader to support Metro and region's transportation system.

As the association of local governments in metropolitan Washington, COG strongly supports efforts to ensure sufficient funding is provided to the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) to operate a safe and reliable Metro system. COG represents 24 local governments in suburban Maryland, Northern Virginia and the District of Columbia including Charles County, Frederick County, Montgomery County, and Prince George's County. Our region is home to nearly 6 million people, including 2.5 million from Maryland, and one of the nation's largest economies. The metropolitan Washington region is forecast to add 1.5 million people and 1 million jobs between 2020 and 2050. Managing this growth—and enhancing the region's quality of life—requires partnership. In the metropolitan Washington region, transit drives economic activity, improves mobility and accessibility, and connects us to the world. This connectivity and economic growth impacts not just those living in our footprint, but all Maryland residents.

Over the last 18 months, COG worked closely with Metro, local governments, and state partners on the DMVMoves initiative to develop a unified vision and sustainable funding model for public transit in our region. This process brought together a diverse group of government, business, and community leaders to take a holistic look at our transit network and decide what our region needs, how much it will cost, how we'll pay for it. That's why it was so critical that the DMVMoves Plan earned the endorsement of area leaders on the COG and Metro boards this past November, supporting an additional \$460 million annually in new, capital funding for Metro to reinvest in and modernize the system. The goal is to establish a sustainable, long-term funding commitment for Maryland, Virginia, and the District of Columbia to provide both the funders and the Metro system the predictability needed to provide safe and reliable service into the future.

This legislation looks to do just that. It provides Maryland's share of the additional dedicated funding for Metro with \$150M, increasing 3 percent annually, starting in FY2029. This regional investment, that grows annually, is essential to modernize and reinvest in infrastructure that improves safety, reliability and capacity. This bill will contribute to maintaining existing service levels and keep Metro efficient, reliable and consistent with repairs and maintenance throughout Maryland and the rest of the region.

Complementary legislation is also being considered by the Virginia General Assembly and being discussed with the District of Columbia in advance of their upcoming budget process. We look forward to continued partnership with Metro and Maryland leadership to ensure the success of our regional transportation system. We urge you to support the Metro Funding Modification Act of 2026.