



SIERRA CLUB

MARYLAND CHAPTER

P.O. Box 278
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Committee: Budget and Taxation

Testimony on: SB 281, Metro Funding Modification Act of 2026

Position: Support

Hearing Date: February 3, 2026

The Maryland Chapter of the Sierra Club urges a favorable report on SB 281, the Metro Funding Modification Act of 2026. This bill would alter the calculation of the amount the Governor is required to include in the annual annual budget each year for the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA), contingent on similar legislation from Virginia and Washington, D.C. It would also require that a rail signal and automation workforce transition is developed in consultation with collective bargaining units, which is critical to ensure that those impacted by the transition have a voice.

WMATA is the #1 rail system in the United States to recover ridership loss from the COVID-19 pandemic and was recently recognized for its success as 2025 Transit Agency of the Year by the American Public Transportation Association. In fiscal year 2025, overall Metro ridership increased more than 9%, with more than 264 million passenger trips. Metrorail customer satisfaction reached its highest recorded level at 89%.

A high level of service, supported by reasonable investments from the compact jurisdictions, is critical to support transit-oriented economic development in Montgomery and Prince George's Counties and to meet the state's climate goals. In 2024, [WMATA estimated](#) that transit avoids an additional 1.2 million metric tons of greenhouse gases each year, which is the same emissions savings as if all the homes in Arlington County, Virginia didn't use energy for one year.

Regional leaders convened by the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments for the *DMVMoves* task force reaffirmed commitment to WMATA's strategic importance by proposing \$460 million in new annual capital funding for Metro, beginning in fiscal year 2028. Sierra Club participated as a member of the DMV Community Partners Advisory Group.

A strong capital budget is also needed to ensure future success. Maryland's dedicated funding for Metro has not grown since 2018. SB 281 will help WMATA's capital fiscal health by ensuring that the state's additional contribution of \$150 million, starting after fiscal year 2029, grows by at least 3% per year.

Separate efforts are needed to ensure stable, dedicated sources of funding for WMATA and other public transit systems across the state, including the Maryland Transit Administration and Locally Operated Transit Systems (LOTS).

For these reasons, we urge you to give a favorable report on SB 281.

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Founded in 1892, the Sierra Club is America's oldest and largest grassroots environmental organization. The Maryland Chapter has over 70,000 members and supporters, and the Sierra Club nationwide has over 800,000 members and nearly four million supporters.