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To: House Environment & Transportation Committee

The members of the National Federation of the Blind of Maryland urge the House Environment & Transportation Committee to give a favorable report with amendment to HB1344. This bill would require the Maryland Transit Administration to study the locally operated transit systems throughout the State; require the study to include certain information regarding cost shares, ridership, and historical cost increases; require the Administration to identify best practices for funding and governance; and require the Administration to submit a report of its findings and recommendations to the Governor and certain committees of the General Assembly by December 1, 2026.

Blind and low-vision individuals would particularly benefit from this bill because we are particularly, and sometimes exclusively, reliant on public transit. To the extent the study identifies areas where locally operated transit systems can be improved and their funding and governance stabilized, we applaud the goals of this legislation. However, there are matters of particular concern to blind and low-vision riders and other riders with disabilities that are not explicitly contemplated by the proposed study. We therefore urge that the bill be amended to specifically include organizations like the National Federation of the Blind of Maryland who represent riders with disabilities in the category of “transit advocacy organizations” and/or “other relevant stakeholders” that the Maryland Transit Administration must consult in preparing the study that the bill requires.

For these reasons, we ask for a favorable report with amendment on HB1344. For questions, please contact me at President@nfbmd.org or at 443-426-4110.

