

March 6, 2026

The Honorable Pam Beidle
Chair, Finance Committee
3 East Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: Letter of Support with Amendments – Senate Bill 947 – Maryland Transit Administration Reform Act

Dear Chair Beidle and Committee members:

The Maryland Department of Transportation respectfully submits a letter in support of Senate Bill 947, with amendments.

SB 947 proposes significant structural and governance reforms within the Maryland Transit Administration (MTA), including the establishment of a Board of Directors for Baltimore Core Transit Service, the creation of a Commuter Services Advisory Board, clarification of management authorities, tort liability reform, authorization of quick take condemnation authority, and the establishment of a statutory framework intended to strengthen transit system oversight and performance.

MTA directly participated in the Workgroup on the Reorganization of the MTA through the 2025 interim session and supports SB 947. Based on the report issued by the Workgroup, SB 947 will enhance governance, strengthen system accountability, and position the agency to deliver reliable, equitable, and forward-looking transit service to Maryland residents.

MTA is grateful that SB 947 implements a fair and reasonable liability cap of \$400,000 per claimant for injuries arising from a single incident, aligning MTA with other State agencies and ensuring financial stability while maintaining accountability. As a vital public transportation provider, MTA faces unique liability challenges due to its exclusion from the Maryland Tort Claims Act.

Without a cap, the administration is exposed to unlimited liability, which places significant strain on resources that could otherwise be dedicated to enhancing transit services for Marylanders. High litigation costs, extensive legal processes, and unpredictable financial burdens can divert essential funding away from safety improvements, service enhancements, and infrastructure investments. Implementing a liability limit would allow MTA to better allocate its resources toward its core mission—providing safe, efficient, and reliable transit options to the public.

SB 947 proposes constitutional amendments and statutory changes to authorize quick-take condemnation authority for MTA projects. Quick-take authority is a critical project delivery tool used by transportation agencies nationwide to facilitate timely project implementation and

The Honorable Pam Beidle
Page Two

maintain eligibility for federal funding programs, while maintaining property owners' rights and due process to seek and be awarded fair property value.

SB 947 also includes reforms that grant MTA delegated procurement authority for capital construction projects on existing, defined, fixed guideway systems. These parity reforms in procurement, tort reform, and quick-take authority are critical and will put MTA in line with peer transit agencies and other MDOT modes, promoting cost and operational efficiencies.

MTA is working with the bill sponsor on several technical amendments for consideration to ensure consistent terminology and definitions throughout the bill, avoid conflicts with language in other state articles, and ensure compliance with federal statutes.

MTA supports SB 947 and its intent to strengthen governance and regional decision making and improve transit system performance. The requested technical amendments are intended to protect federal funding and contractual obligations, ensure clear and effective governance, support sound operational management, and enable timely and effective implementation. MTA looks forward to working with the bill sponsor and the committee on these amendments. MTA respectfully requests favorable consideration of Senate Bill 947 with these amendments.

Respectfully submitted,

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