TESTIMONY FOR SB0947
Maryland Transit Administration Reform Act

Bill Sponsor: Senator McCray
Committee: Finance
Organization Submitting: Maryland Legislative Coalition
Person Submitting: Cecilia Plante, co-chair
Position: FAVORABLE

I am submitting this testimony in favor of SB0947 on behalf of the Maryland Legislative Coalition. The Maryland Legislative Coalition is an association of activists - individuals and grassroots groups in every district in the state. We are unpaid citizen lobbyists, and our Coalition supports well over 30,000 members.

If the remit of the Maryland Transit Administration (MTA) was to make transportation in Maryland world class, or even just good, they have failed epically. There is no easy way to get from any one city in Maryland to any other city unless you a) drive (which many people can't afford), and b) sit in traffic forever. We have no good public transportation system.

In Frederick, I live less than 1 mile from a rail station. However, it doesn't run except for rush hour on weekends, and I can only use it to get to DC, not to Baltimore, or Annapolis. And, let's not talk about the idiot move to drop the Red Line. The MTA does not make good decisions and it's time to have some oversight.

This bill, if enacted, would reform the Maryland Transit Administration--which runs Baltimore-area transit as well as statewide commuter rail and commuter bus service--by creating two new boards to oversee their decision-making. The board would have the ability to oversee budgets, approve new initiatives and policies and have approval authority, supported by at least two–thirds of the members of the board, over any decision by the Department of Transportation or the Administration to withdraw a new starts capital investment grant or another federal grant for any Baltimore core transit service area project.

All we have to say, is its past time to do this. Our members have no confidence in the MTA and we believe a lot of our money has gone to waste.

We strongly support this bill and recommend a **FAVORABLE** report in committee.