



P.O. Box 278
Riverdale, MD 20738

Committee: Public Safety, Transportation, and Environment Subcommittee (Budget and Taxation Committee)

Testimony on: MDOT WMATA - Operating Budget (J00A0104)

Hearing Date: February 15, 2024

The Maryland Chapter of the Sierra Club is pleased to see that the Governor's proposed budget provides \$150 million in FY 2025 and FY 2026 and \$250 million in FY 2027 and beyond for the Washington Metropolitan Transit Authority's operating budget. Unfortunately, however, this does not fully close the operating budget gap. We therefore urge Maryland to go further in supporting WMATA in order to do our state's part in closing the Authority's \$750 million operating budget gap for Fiscal Year 2025 and ensuring long-term financial sustainability. Adequate funding for WMATA would prevent steep fare hikes and wage freezes and is needed to reduce climate pollution from passenger vehicles.

Right now, our partner organizations estimate that if Maryland provided approximately an additional \$59 million in FY 2025 (for a total of \$209 million) it would cover Maryland's portion of the remaining budget gap. Recognizing Metro's importance to the District, Washington, D.C. recently stepped up by providing \$200 million.

Fully funding WMATA's budget gap is necessary to prevent increasing fares, wage freezes, and deferring maintenance and modernization projects. For context, over 33,000 Prince George's County residents and 37,000 Montgomery County residents used transit to get to work in 2022. However, these numbers barely scratch the surface of WMATA's impact on Maryland's economy.

WMATA is the only major transit system in the country without its own dedicated source of operating funding. In the long-term, Maryland, D.C., and Virginia must identify a new cross-jurisdictional dedicated funding source for WMATA to ensure that our regional transit needs have stable, adequate funding, rather than facing regular budgetary crises.

We urge the Committee to identify ways to provide funding that adequately serves the needs of the thousands of Marylanders who rely on Metro to sustainably get to work, for leisure, and to meet their daily needs.

Jane Lyons-Raeder
Chair, Transportation Committee
janelyons@gmail.com

Josh Tulkin
Chapter Director
Josh.Tulkin@MDSierra.org