

WASHINGTON METROPOLITAN AREA TRANSIT AUTHORITY
(WMATA)

PUBLIC HEARING

Hearing No. 527 Docket No. B07-3
METRO FISCAL YEAR 2009 FARE PROPOSAL

Rockville, Maryland
Wednesday, November 14, 2007

1 PARTICIPANTS:

2 Board Members:

3 ELIZABETH HEWLETT

4 GERALD FRANCIS

5 PETER BENJAMIN

6 GORDON LINTON

7 Registered Speakers:

8 GARY ERENDRICH

9 FRED WAGNER

10 JOEL RYERSON

11 BRUCE ST. JOHN

12 DON HOPKINS

13 ELISSA LEIF

14 KONRAD REICKE

15 ANN T. GLEAVY

16 LARAINÉ B. HOPE

17 CANEISHA MILLS

18 CRYSTAL KIM

19 ESTEBAN OLIVARES

20 EUGENE PURYEAR

21 LIZ LOWENGARD

22 NATASHA PERSAUD

1 PARTICIPANTS (CONT'D):
2 PETA LINDSAY
3 ROBERT MOSES
4 ROGER SCOTT
5 SARAH FRIEDMAN
6 SUNIL FREEMAN
7 TOM ESBROOK
8 MATT MURRAY
9 ROSS B. CAPON
10 ROGER PLAUT
11 JUDITH GROMINGER
12 STEVEN ELMER
13 MICHAEL SHEIB
14 VICKI GOTTLICH
15 ROBIN MARKS
16 NATHAN HARRINGTON
17 JIM MADARAS
18 MIKE LAUGHTON
19 JEFF ONGER
20 KENNETH ZWICK
21 BEN ROSS
22 MIKE RABKIN

- 1 PARTICIPANTS (CONT'D):
- 2 CAESAR RORIE
- 3 JEFF LABOW
- 4 RHONDA TILDON
- 5 HOWARD AWRICH
- 6 JOSEPH P. BRADLEY
- 7 CARY ABEND
- 8 VERNETTA GAINES
- 9 JEFFREY NOEL-NOSBAUM

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1 P R O C E E D I N G S

2 (7:08 p.m.)

3 MR. BENJAMIN: Good evening, ladies
4 and gentlemen, and welcome to tonight's
5 public hearing on Metro's Fiscal Year 2009
6 fare proposal. I am Peter Benjamin, with me
7 is Gordon Linton to my left, and we are
8 members of the Metro's Board of Directors
9 representing Montgomery County in the State
10 of Maryland.

11 The purpose of tonight's hearing is
12 to hear your comments about a set of fare
13 proposals for both Metrorail and for Metrobus
14 and for amended parking fees that we are
15 considering as part of our Fiscal 2009
16 operating budget.

17 This is one of six public hearings
18 that are being conducted throughout the
19 region, and your comments will become part of
20 the public record that will be examined by
21 the Metro Board of Directors during our
22 discussions and deliberations on the 2009

1 operating budget as we consider possible fare
2 increases. Any fare increase that might be
3 approved by the Metro Board is tentatively
4 scheduled to take effect on or about January
5 6, 2008.

6 Metro is proposing to implement the
7 fare adjustment in early 2008 before the
8 beginning of Fiscal 2009, and the additional
9 revenue would be reserved for use until July
10 2008, which is the true official start of
11 2009.

12 For those attendees who might have
13 questions or comments about other aspects of
14 Metro's service, please note that Metro staff
15 has set up an information table during this
16 open house -- during the open house portion
17 of our meeting, and the staff is ready to
18 listen to comments or questions on topics
19 other than the fare proposal.

20 So it's important for us if we're
21 going to get through all of this, and if many
22 people are going to be able to speak to focus

1 on the fare proposal, which is the purpose of
2 this hearing. If you have subsidy -- I'm
3 sorry, if you have service issues or other
4 issues that you want to discuss, there are
5 staff sitting outside who are more than happy
6 to discuss that with you, take your notes,
7 and be able to respond to you later.

8 We have also been joined by our
9 Board Chair, Ms. Elizabeth Hewlett, who is
10 sitting over there, and who will also be
11 listening to all of your comments. Notice of
12 this hearing was made in The Washington Post,
13 advertisements were also placed in The
14 Washington Informer, the City Paper, India
15 this Week, Express India, El Tiempo Latino,
16 and the Washington Hispanic.

17 In addition, notice was posted on
18 Metro website, in our buses and trains, and
19 sent to area libraries in the City of
20 Alexandria, Arlington, Fairfax, Montgomery,
21 and Prince George's Counties, and the
22 District of Columbia.

1 Briefly, I will cover the procedure
2 that we will follow during the hearing.
3 First, we'll hear a staff statement
4 presentation on the proposal. Second, we
5 will hear from those persons who registered
6 in advance, to present testimony. Each
7 pre-registered speaker will be limited to
8 three minutes, except for public officials
9 who will be heard first, and will be allowed
10 five minutes.

11 Third, we'll hear from anyone
12 present, who indicates a desire to be heard.
13 Please provide your name to Ms. Chambliss who
14 is raising her hand, if you wish to speak and
15 have not pre-registered. Each speaker who
16 registers to speak tonight will also be
17 limited to three minutes. I'll signal when
18 you have 30 seconds left -- actually,
19 Leandra, could you do that?

20 SPEAKER: (No response)

21 MR. BENJAMIN: Thank you -- and
22 will also let you know when your time has

1 expired. When you come to the microphone,
2 which is at the table up there -- it's a
3 portable microphone -- please state your name
4 and address for the record. If you have a
5 written copy of your comments, please provide
6 them to Ms. Chambliss.

7 Further testimony may also be
8 submitted in writing until 5:00 p.m. Monday,
9 November 26th to the Office of the Secretary
10 at Metro, 600 Fifth Street, Northwest,
11 Washington, D.C. 20001. Alternatively, you
12 may send an e-mail to
13 public-hearing-testimony@wmata.com. Please
14 include your name, address, and docket B07-3
15 in your submission. If you forget the docket
16 they'll figure it out.

17 Please note that the use of
18 profanity will not be tolerated during this
19 public meeting. In addition, smoking is only
20 permitted outside on the sidewalk. And if
21 you haven't already done so, please silence
22 all cell phones. A verbatim transcript will

1 be made of this hearing, and a copy of the
2 transcript will be purchased -- may be
3 purchased from the Beta Court Reporting at
4 telephone number (202) 464-2400.

5 I'm now calling upon our Deputy
6 General Manager, Gerald Francis, for the
7 staff statement. Gerald?

8 MR. FRANCIS: Thank you, Mr.
9 Benjamin. In the last 12 years, Metro has
10 had only two fare increases: the first in
11 July of 2003, and the second in July of 2004.
12 Although fares have increased approximately
13 14 percent for bus and 23 percent for rail,
14 inflation has grown more than 37 percent, and
15 the cost of fuel for vehicles has grown more
16 than 300 percent.

17 Metro avoided a fare increase last
18 summer through personnel cuts and program
19 changes that saved about \$34 million.
20 Metro's FY -- Fiscal Year 2009 operating
21 budget is affected by several major cost
22 drivers. The first is that a onetime funding

1 source was used in Fiscal Year 2008, and will
2 not appear in Fiscal Year 2009's budget.

3 The second -- and that inflation
4 has increased personnel expenses and the cost
5 of energy. Metro does not operate at a
6 profit, and customers typically only pay
7 around 55 percent of the cost of Metrobus,
8 Metrorail, and MetroAccess operations. This
9 includes approximately 79 percent cost
10 recovery for Metrorail, and 32 percent for
11 Metrobus.

12 Due to the fact that passenger
13 fares and other revenues do not cover all the
14 expenses, state and local governments provide
15 support to cover the gap. It is also
16 important to know that fare revenues are not
17 used for any capital expenditures such as
18 buying buses and railcars. Metro's capital
19 budget receives revenue from federal funds,
20 state, local governments, and debt financing.

21 Metro's fiscal year 2009 operating
22 budget is estimated at \$1.3 billion with a

1 \$109 million shortfall. Metro is proposing
2 to balance the budget through a \$33 million
3 or 6.5 percent increase in state, local,
4 government support and fare increases. The
5 proposed increase is estimated to generate
6 \$111 million, provided that rider travel
7 patterns do not change significantly.

8 The proposal assumes that there
9 will be some change to rider travel patterns
10 resulting in a loss of revenue, but it does
11 not presume that there will be a major shift
12 from peak to non-peak travel. That \$111
13 million would be reduced if the board lowers
14 as any of the proposed fares and fees.

15 Should we not get either a fare
16 increase or increase of government
17 contributions to cover the shortfall, we
18 would have to look to our last resort. That
19 will be a cut service. This goes against our
20 philosophy, which is to provide the best
21 quality service possible. It's important to
22 know that the fare increases are occurring or

1 are proposed at public transit agencies
2 across the country.

3 If you look at bus fares, you can
4 see that this fare proposal will keep Metro's
5 bus fares among the lowest in the nation.
6 Though it is difficult to do an apples-to-
7 apples comparison, the same is true of the
8 rail boarding. The proposed fare increase is
9 planned to begin in early 2008, in order to
10 keep the increase lower for customers.

11 Waiting until July 2008 would
12 amount to a higher percentage increase in
13 fares. Other benefits of the proposed fare
14 changes include no reduction in Metrobus or
15 Metrorail service as proposed for the coming
16 year. In fact, by the end of 2008, 50
17 percent of the rush hour trains will be
18 eight-car trains. No fare increase for all
19 peak Metrorail service.

20 The boarding charge, when using
21 SmarTrip for Metrobus, will remain the same.
22 After a one-year transition period, Metrorail

1 and Metrobus transfers will be valid on
2 SmarTrip, and no increase to MetroAccess
3 fares. The range of proposed options that
4 are under consideration include Metrorail and
5 Metrobus fare proposal, and changes to
6 Metrorail parking rates and fees.

7 Metro staff has prepared a summary
8 of the fare increase proposals that is
9 available this evening. The summary, titled
10 "Metro Proposed Fare Changes," will provide
11 you with a detailed description of the
12 proposed fare changes. While staff will now
13 go through this document in great detail, we
14 will provide some important points.

15 An increase of 30 cents for the
16 Metrorail peak boarding charge, an increase
17 of 80 cents for the maximum Metrorail peak
18 fare, no increase for Metrorail off-peak
19 fare, an increase of 10 cents for the
20 Metrobus cash boarding charge, no increase
21 for the Metrobus boarding charge when using
22 SmarTrip, no increase for the MetroAccess

1 fare, an increase of \$1.15 for the daily
2 parking fee, and an increase of \$10 for the
3 monthly reserved parking fee, an increase in
4 the number of reserved parking spaces by
5 3,500.

6 After 1 year, rail-to-bus and
7 bus-to-bus transfers will be available only
8 with use of the SmarTrip card. That
9 concludes the summary of the fare change
10 proposal, and it is important, though, that
11 the proposals offer a menu of options for the
12 Metro Board of Directors as they consider a
13 possible fare increase. Thank you, and now
14 I'll turn it back over to Mr. Benjamin.

15 MR. LINTON: Actually, Mr. Francis,
16 I'm going to participate in this portion of
17 our hearing.

18 Good evening, everyone. I would
19 like to have the first person who we're going
20 to have come before us this evening to
21 testify. And that's Gary Erenrich, who --
22 Gary is going to represent the County Exec

1 Ike Leggett this evening. And Gary, if
2 you'll come forth and --

3 MR. ERENRICH: Thank you.

4 MR. LINTON: -- you may start.

5 MR. ERENRICH: Okay. Good evening.
6 I'm Gary Erenrich, and as Mr. Linton said,
7 I'm testifying on behalf of the county --
8 Montgomery County Executive Ike Leggett.
9 Transportation funding is an important topic
10 for discussion and all -- and action at all
11 levels of government, from the federal
12 government to Maryland and local governments
13 and to the users.

14 Much of the debate focuses on
15 capital funding to rehabilitate our aging
16 rail and bus systems, support for local bus
17 systems such as Ride On, and on annual local
18 agency operating assistance. In many ways,
19 our Metro system is the envy of many transit
20 systems with operating revenues mainly from
21 fares covering about 58 percent of total
22 operating costs of both Metrorail and

1 Metrobus.

2 But within Metro, fare recovery is
3 a two-tiered picture. Metrorail recovers
4 from fares one of the nation's highest rates
5 of 81 percent -- and that's from the last
6 quarterly report, Metrobus above 33 percent,
7 which is in line with the industry standards
8 and averages. This means that our Metrorail
9 passengers are covering a substantially
10 higher amount of operating costs than the bus
11 system.

12 In general, longer distance rail
13 riders should provide some support for the
14 bus system to encourage transit use, to
15 complement the rail rider, and to offer lower
16 cost bus fares to provide mobility for
17 transit- dependant residents and for choice
18 riders. It's good public policy to promote
19 transit ridership and reduce congestion,
20 improve our air quality, and sustain a high
21 quality of living.

22 Transit fares encourage current --

1 I'm sorry -- transit fares should encourage
2 transit and not price out commuters, leading
3 to increased congestion and more air
4 pollution. However, the fare structure
5 should not overburden -- I'm sorry -- one
6 riding segment to support another. This is a
7 particularly important concept in the
8 proposed Metrorail fare increase and the
9 parking rate and fee increase.

10 The public hearing docket proposed
11 to raise \$111 million over 18 months with a
12 110 of this attributable to peak period
13 Metrorail fares and commuter parking charges.
14 Only \$1 million, or less than 1 percent of
15 the funds raised, will come from bus riders.

16 In fact, the Metrorail and the
17 parking proposals were adopted -- in fact, if
18 these proposals were adopted without changes,
19 Metrorail would have, I would estimate, an
20 operating cost recovery of over 90 percent
21 versus 81 percent today, while Metrobus would
22 remain at 33 percent. This is not a balanced

1 approach, and represents for many
2 long-distance riders, a substantial fare
3 increase of 25 percent.

4 Besides the proposals being
5 unbalanced between rail and bus, it is also
6 unbalanced on the rail side with Montgomery
7 County residents paying a disproportionate
8 share of increased fees and fares.
9 Specifically, Montgomery County residents
10 make up 18-1/2 percent of peak period rail
11 riders, but under the fare proposal,
12 Montgomery County riders will pay over 26
13 percent of the rail fare increase, or 40
14 percent more than based on proportion of
15 riders.

16 The cost of the rail consumer also
17 includes the large increase in parking
18 charges. I have several recommendations on
19 the fare package for consideration. These
20 include, limit the maximum fare to a 50 cent
21 increase from the existing 3.90 to 4.40, and
22 not the proposed increase to 4.70. Second,

1 limit the increase in the parking charge to
2 50 cents, not the proposed increase of the
3 \$1.15.

4 And third, do not implement an
5 across-the-board increase in the number of
6 reserved parking spaces. Examine the number
7 of reserved parking spaces on a
8 facility-by-facility basis. Only one garage
9 in Montgomery County has a waiting list for
10 reserved parking, and the County is funding
11 the construction of a second garage at that
12 location to accommodate this parking growth.

13 The impact of these recommendations
14 will be to provide a balance between
15 Montgomery County rail riders and the other
16 riders in the region. It's very important to
17 encourage transit ridership, and we must be
18 cognizant to the total cost of the transit
19 ride for commuters and the cost of providing
20 the transit service.

21 Rail recovers a very high
22 percentage of its cost from operating

1 revenue, and it's our understanding that
2 parking fees cover all operating costs for
3 parking. The region must work together to
4 find the right balance to continue growing
5 our transit ridership. Thank you very much.

6 (Applause)

7 MR. LINTON: We'll pull our table
8 up, and also change our seating arrangements,
9 so that we can allow those who are testifying
10 an opportunity to go and sit but also to look
11 directly at us. So that's the adjustment
12 we're making.

13 Mr. Fred Wagner? Thank you, Mr.
14 Wagner, you may begin.

15 MR. WAGNER: Thank you. I am Fred
16 Wagner, I live at 14517 Melinda Lane in
17 Rockville. I am a loyal Metro rider having
18 taken the Red Line to work for 20 years. I'd
19 like to focus my comments on one aspect of
20 the proposal that is reserved parking and the
21 parking situation generally. I think it
22 would be a grave mistake to increase across

1 the board the reserved spots.

2 I think the frustration that many
3 riders feel driving by rows after rows of
4 empty spots during the highest peak of
5 travel, especially at the Glenmont Metro
6 Station, is absolutely infuriating. And the
7 idea that more of those spots will remain
8 empty at the time when most commuters wish to
9 go to work, would be a terrible blow to the
10 morale of many riders seeking parking spots.

11 I say this in direct contribution
12 to my own interests. I have been on the
13 waitlist for reserved spot for four years,
14 and I have yet to break triple digits. As of
15 last week, I was number 101 on the list, and
16 it seems to progress about five or so slots
17 every year.

18 In addition, this raises another
19 issue about reserved parking that needs to be
20 considered, but is not part of this proposal,
21 and that is if you are concentrating fare
22 increases on the peak hours, the hours of the

1 reserved spots must be changed. By that I
2 mean right now the reserved spots are
3 reserved until 10:00 a.m.

4 I cannot tell you the number of
5 people that I've seen at Shady Grove or at
6 Glenmont in their cars at 10 of 10:00 sitting
7 there, because they ticket you if you are
8 there a little bit before 10:00 a.m., waiting
9 for that. It is truly unnecessary, given the
10 amount of spots that remain empty, oftentimes
11 up until that very late hour.

12 I know many people would work a
13 different schedule if they could arrive
14 downtown, say, at 9:45, at 10:00 a.m., but it
15 is impossible to arrive at 10:45 or 11:00
16 a.m. If you are paying for a reserved spot,
17 given the demand at peak, and given the
18 emphasis on peak hours, it really should end
19 at 9:00 a.m. I have made this request
20 repeatedly to Metro officials, and not
21 received a satisfactory response or rationale
22 why it does not change.

1 I know there are many issues on the
2 table tonight, and many people will speak to
3 the fare increases generally. I'd like to
4 restrict my comments specifically to the
5 parking. Do not increase the reserved spots,
6 I know it's a source of revenue, but it would
7 not be fair to the average rider.

8 And please change the hours set for
9 reserved parking from 10:00 a.m. to 9:00
10 a.m., so that you can truly stagger people's
11 commuting patterns, and spread out the crush
12 that we currently experience on the Red Line.
13 Thank you very much.

14 MR. LINTON: Mr. Wagner, let me
15 thank you for your testimony. I will reserve
16 my own personal comments later, although I've
17 actually experienced some of the same things
18 that you're suggesting at the Glenmont
19 Station myself. So I clearly understand it.
20 And also, I've received letters, I don't know
21 if they are from you.

22 But I know over the years I've

1 received some letters from residents in this
2 area about the same issue in regards to the
3 reserved parking and the number of spaces
4 that remain empty during the peak hour when
5 people really actually need to use them.

6 But that's exactly the kind of
7 testimony, and I would just say that to
8 others that we need -- we need insights from
9 your own experiences to help us try to deal
10 with this major challenge we have, in
11 balancing this budget, and some of the
12 impacts that those proposals that are before
13 you now or have on you individually.

14 So I encourage everyone in the
15 audience, if you could focus your remark with
16 that kind of constructive assistance to us
17 and make it into the record that would be
18 very helpful.

19 MR. WAGNER: I would add, I think,
20 that the increase in fares probably would
21 seem more palatable if we knew there would be
22 a concomitant increase in spots available to

1 us. So looking for that other Glenmont
2 garage is something that's long overdue.

3 MR. LINTON: Thank you. Joel
4 Ryerson?

5 MR. RYERSON: Good evening, panel.
6 My name is Joel Ryerson. I'm residing at
7 8611 Laverne Drive, Adelphi, Maryland 20783.
8 I'm not too happy about the fare increase
9 because they might have even -- not even
10 fortunately like me, but one unfortunately
11 like some other people may have been fixing
12 (off mike) in tax, and they might not be able
13 to afford it.

14 So in -- and some of the local
15 buses in my county don't have no SmarTrip
16 card fare boxes yet. I haven't seen them,
17 and they said they were there, but they
18 haven't -- I haven't seen them at Prince
19 George's Plaza, at Hyattsville and that's all
20 I had gone to, those two stations. And I
21 haven't seen anything on the website either,
22 and they're going to have that new fare boxes

1 -- in the bus (off mike) the bus.

2 So I hope they -- I know -- why
3 don't have it and the region buses have it
4 and the train stations have it, but we are
5 very slow at getting new fare boxes. So I'm
6 kind of waiting for this new fare boxes, you
7 want to get the SmarTrip card. I didn't get
8 it and I use these (off mike) for right now
9 until they get those new fare boxes. So
10 thanks for taking this opportunity to talk to
11 you.

12 MR. LINTON: Thank you, Mr.
13 Ryerson. Hope the -- I asked the staff to
14 make a note of that too, and I see our chair
15 who is from Prince George's County, I know,
16 is taking note of the comment about the
17 SmarTrip fare boxes in the bus, I guess, that
18 he's been making reference to. Thank you.

19 Mr. Bruce St. John?

20 MR. ST. JOHN: My name is Bruce St.
21 John, 4229 Sandcastle Lane, Olney, Maryland
22 20832. When I reviewed the fare increase, it

1 just seemed to me that the increase in
2 parking, relative to the increased request
3 for --

4 SPEAKER: Could you speak up so
5 that we can hear you --

6 MR. ST. JOHN: Sure -- for the bus
7 system was backwards.

8 SPEAKER: Get the microphone --

9 MR. ST. JOHN: Okay. Can you hear
10 me now?

11 SPEAKER: That's better.

12 MR. ST. JOHN: Yeah, okay, sorry.
13 So I'm here to basically testify on my own
14 behalf that Metrorail is expensive now. The
15 off-peak fare from Glenmont to the DuPont
16 Circle Farragut North Station is \$2.35. I
17 can drive for less. So, under certain
18 circumstances I don't use Metro. I like
19 Metro, I ride it in rush hour when I'm going
20 downtown for the whole day, but there are a
21 number of circumstances that Metrorail is
22 already too expensive.

1 You're counting on \$111 million in
2 fare increase, but you're assuming that
3 consumer behavior won't change. So to me
4 Metrorail is expensive, my behavior will
5 change slightly. I believe that the proposed
6 increase in parking is unreasonable. Your
7 own figures that the staff presented tend to
8 show that my initial impression was probably
9 correct.

10 The bus system does not carry the
11 weight of operating the bus system so that
12 the fare increase might not be realized. It
13 seems to me from reading in the publications,
14 that Metro's ridership is way up in the last
15 years, but somehow they've got more customers
16 but are doing worse financially. So there's
17 something wrong with the pricing.

18 So I call upon the Board to vote
19 the entire fare increase package down, and
20 send it back to the drawing Board and make
21 them come back with a reasonable pricing
22 model that reflects the cost of operating the

1 three components of the system. And I think
2 the parking increase is way too high, I think
3 the bus increase is way too low, the
4 Metrorail increase -- although the system is
5 very expensive -- is probably doable.

6 Your own figures in the staff
7 presentation show that the bus operating fare
8 is less than the other major markets. I will
9 tell you that the rail fare is more than in
10 the other major markets. You go to New York
11 City, it's \$2 to ride anywhere. Go to
12 Boston, it's \$2 to ride anywhere. Metrorail
13 is expensive. And I've written up my
14 comments, I've left them for you to review.
15 Thank you for your time.

16 MR. LINTON: Thank you very much,
17 Mr. St. John. Don Hopkins?

18 MR. HOPKINS: Good evening,
19 gentlemen. My name is Don Hopkins. I live
20 at 1226 Gaither Road in Rockville. And
21 Monday through Friday I get on at Shady Grove
22 and ride the Red Line all the way down to

1 Pentagon City paying the maximum fee Monday
2 through Friday. I wanted to comment to you
3 because after reviewing the proposed fare
4 structures, I, like many others, believe it
5 is just excessive, and that it creates an
6 immense financial burden in a
7 disproportionate manner on your ridership.

8 I just can't believe that you're
9 trying to go from a \$109 million shortfall to
10 go to a \$2 million profit in 18 months. That
11 kills your ridership. The financial burden
12 is immense. I believe the increases are
13 disproportionate between those that live out
14 in Shady Grove and Silver Spring with the
15 long distances as compared to those that live
16 in downtown.

17 You make a statement that fares
18 have not kept pace with inflation -- a true
19 statement. But you must remember the
20 salaries have not kept pace with inflation.
21 We cannot pay these fares. We do it, we
22 suffer. I believe that the increases you

1 proposed are just excessive. And I know that
2 if you were truthful with us, in 2 to 3
3 years, you will be sitting here again asking
4 for another increase.

5 So -- my mother always said, you
6 know, don't complain unless you have a better
7 solution. I provided a better solution -- I
8 submitted it to the Board, and I have a paper
9 copy that I'll leave with you. Thank you for
10 your comments.

11 MR. LINTON: Thank you very much,
12 Mr. Hopkins --

13 (Applause)

14 MR. LINTON: I will look at your
15 solution that you provided. Elissa Leif?
16 Elissa?

17 (No response)

18 MR. LINTON: Okay, Konrad -- is it
19 Riecke? Riecke?

20 MR. RIECKE: Is this okay?

21 SPEAKER: Go ahead.

22 MR. RIECKE: All right. My name is

1 Konrad Riecke. I live at 157 Crossbow Lane
2 in Gaithersburg. And what I wanted to give
3 you is just an idea of what this budget --
4 this fare increase actually means to me
5 personally. I'm a librarian. I live with my
6 partner and he is a teacher, so we make a
7 decent living, but there is not a lot of
8 extra money floating around in our budget.

9 And we moved to Gaithersburg about
10 3 years ago because it was the only place in
11 the D.C. area where we could actually afford
12 a house. It's a small house. And what I
13 wanted to say is that I don't believe that
14 you shouldn't raise fares, but I believe that
15 you need to reconsider the severity of these
16 fares, especially on people with modest
17 incomes.

18 The first thing I want to point out
19 is the high cost of my commute. And my
20 commute current wave, which is daily parking
21 at Shady Grove plus a roundtrip fare to Metro
22 Center, cost me about \$2,830 a year. With

1 fare increases that's -- that will rise to
2 \$3,490, which is an increase of about \$660 a
3 year or 23 percent.

4 I'm fortunate that my employer
5 gives me a transit subsidy of \$110 a month --
6 that's a considerable help, but this fare
7 increase is completely out of pocket, and
8 it's not a pretax deduction for me. It's
9 just another \$660 that I can't put into my
10 401(k) or use to pay off my student loans.
11 It's really a significant impact to my
12 budget, and for the past few weeks I've been
13 really reconsidering living in the D.C. area
14 at all.

15 I would consider taking the bus to
16 and from Metro, but the Ride On schedules
17 were changed about a year after I moved into
18 my house. So taking the bus to the Metro is
19 no longer an option for me. There is one --
20 sorry I -- correction -- if I were to take
21 the bus, it would take me about an
22 hour-and-a-half to get home every night. So

1 it's really not an option.

2 The second point I wanted to make
3 is that the current system, which as far as I
4 know is going to continue on to the new fare
5 plan, is constructed so that riders like me
6 are forced to pay the maximum possible fare.
7 If I could use a weekly pass, I think --
8 which is the seven-day fast pass -- the
9 yearly cost of my commute would increase by
10 about \$400.

11 However, in order to get the
12 transit subsidy from my employer and the
13 pretax deduction from my paycheck, I have to
14 have that money deposited on to my SmarTrip.
15 And since funds on my SmarTrip can't be used
16 to purchase a weekly pass, I'm forced to pay
17 the maximum fare.

18 And I wanted to ask you again to
19 consider that not everyone who lives in the
20 suburbs does so because they make a high
21 salary, or live in an enormous house. Many
22 of us do so because the cost of housing

1 closer into the city is prohibitively
2 expensive. Asking us to bear
3 disproportionately large amount of this fare
4 increase is unreasonable, and it will have a
5 significant impact on budgets already
6 stretched to the limit by the high cost of
7 living in D.C.

8 And one other point I didn't write
9 down but I wanted to make, is that you
10 shouldn't assume that everyone will keep up
11 with their current ridership patterns. I
12 know for me, if this fare increase goes into
13 place, I will stop driving to the Metro, and
14 my partner will have to pick me up every
15 night at the Metro station, but it will save
16 me enough money that it's worth the
17 inconvenience. So my contribution to the
18 system will actually decrease. So that's it.
19 Thank you.

20 (Applause)

21 MR. LINTON: Sure.

22 MR. BENJAMIN: Thank you, Mr.

1 Riecke. I just wanted to comment that the
2 idea that you put forward, the whole idea of
3 making sure that we can get things like the
4 weekly pass on to the SmarTrip card so that
5 you can make use of it if you have an
6 employer's subsidy, are the kinds of things
7 we really like to hear here. None of us, no
8 member of the Board, no member of the staff,
9 wants to increase fares. That's not
10 something we want to do.

11 So any ideas you can give us, some
12 of the testimony that we're hearing right now
13 about which fares are the ones that are most
14 onerous and which ones are less so, how it
15 affects you, those are all the really
16 important things that we really need to hear.
17 And any ideas like making sure that you can
18 get a pass on to your SmarTrip card so that
19 you can use the employer's subsidy.

20 MR. LINTON: Thank you. Ann
21 Gleavy?

22 MS. GLEAVY: Good evening.

1 MR. LINTON: Good evening.

2 MS. GLEAVY: I'm Ann Gleavy, 8
3 Sunrise Court, Potomac, Maryland 20854. Good
4 evening. I work for the federal government.
5 I have been a Metro rider for almost 20 years
6 now. I am actually focusing on the --

7 SPEAKER: (Off mike)

8 MS. GLEAVY: Oh. Sorry. Okay. I
9 have been a government employee for almost 20
10 years now or actually over 20 years, and I
11 have been riding the Red Line. It -- I do
12 not -- I have a problem with the increase in
13 the money, but more -- that I have a problem
14 with is the service. The increase would be
15 fine if the service on the Red Line would be
16 better.

17 Every single day there seems to be
18 a problem with the Red Line. It is very
19 stressful. I -- on two occasions -- let me
20 just bring you this. You do say that \$4.1
21 billion is in order to sustain service
22 levels, maintain the system, and meet

1 projected demands. Well, I have been riding
2 this system, and every day there is a problem
3 -- malfunctions on the line, we have to sit
4 in the stations and wait in the tunnels.

5 If you want to increase the fares,
6 that's fine. Could you please make sure that
7 we get to work on time? I -- twice that I
8 can -- in the last year-and-a-half, two times
9 I was in a fire -- or there were fires --
10 DuPont Circle -- I had to walk. I had to
11 walk through the tunnel. One other time at
12 Bethesda, we ended up getting out of Bethesda
13 there was no way that anybody was getting
14 anywhere. Metro did not give us any
15 transportation. Last August there was a
16 suspicious package --

17 MR. LINTON: Ann, excuse me?

18 MS. GLEAVY: Yes.

19 MR. LINTON: I'm going to have to
20 bring this to a close because if you have --
21 you want to make some more suggestions
22 regarding our service, our staff will be

1 gladly be there to listen to you. This
2 hearing is specifically assigned to the fare
3 increase and --

4 MS. GLEAVY: Okay, that's fine.
5 Let me just say then -- let me reiterate --
6 if you give us good service, we'll be glad to
7 pay for good service.

8 (Applause)

9 MR. LINTON: And let me just say to
10 the audience it's not that I don't welcome
11 the comments about service, because there are
12 issues that we need to hear and there are
13 issues that we need to address. But the
14 record here is very specific, the testimony
15 that we have here is going to very much be
16 considered by this Board. We need to get on
17 the record, information related to the fare
18 increase and the fare structure.

19 We need to have that on the record.
20 The comments that were made related to that I
21 found to be very helpful. We need to get
22 more of those from this audience before we

1 leave here this evening. And I'm
2 unfortunately going to have to fine anyone
3 who else is making testimony outside of the
4 structure of the hearing -- out of order,
5 because we need to proceed through this, and
6 we have a long list of those who have come to
7 address the fare increase.

8 Laraine Hope?

9 MS. HOPE: My name is Laraine Hope,
10 7 Winder Court, Rockville, Maryland. Thank
11 you for the opportunity of speaking this
12 evening. I'm a resident of Rockville who
13 works in business planning and program
14 management for a federal government agency in
15 downtown Washington. The social and economic
16 premises behind the proposed Metro and
17 parking fare increases are flawed in four
18 major ways.

19 By the way, I have worked as
20 appraising economist for the federal
21 government, and I've testified before
22 congressional commissions.

1 The first flaw is the proposal
2 assumes that potential customers will pay any
3 price to use the Metro system. This is
4 simply not true. Options such as driving and
5 carpooling exist, and will be used by more
6 and more people as fares increase. This is
7 Economics 101. I myself have investigated
8 carpooling, and am likely to take advantage
9 of that option, should the fares -- the
10 current fare proposal go into effect.

11 Two, the proposal assumes that
12 people will pay steep fare increases for poor
13 and declining service. This reasoning is
14 backwards. Service also influences demand,
15 and poor service will generally diminish
16 demand. I won't say anything more about
17 services. The lady who spoke before me had
18 some comments.

19 Third, the proposal assumes that
20 commuters who ride longer distances should be
21 punished financially because they ride
22 farther. People are already paying more,

1 financially, to accommodate the distance
2 differential, and they are also paying with
3 their time. Many of my fellow commuters get
4 on at the Rockville station after long rides
5 on MARC trains.

6 Four, and finally, decreased use of
7 metro, increased use of cars is not good for
8 the environment. In the current business and
9 social climate where sustainability is
10 thankfully becoming a buzz word this proposal
11 operates against basic, social, and political
12 principles.

13 How much time do I have left?

14 Okay. To summarize, there are four
15 alternatives. I'm sorry. There are
16 alternatives to metro which people will use
17 if the proposed fares are implemented. This
18 is simple economics. Two, poor service does
19 not justify price increases. Three,
20 customers who live outside Washington, D.C.
21 do not necessarily have more time or money to
22 spend on transportation than others. In fact

1 they already are spending more time and money
2 based on a distance differential.

3 Four, the impact to the environment
4 of decreased metro ridership will not be
5 socially beneficial and is likely to have a
6 negative effect on further funding for
7 metro's infrastructure. Colleagues at work
8 and neighbors in Rockville join me in asking
9 you to both reconsider this proposal and look
10 at ways of improving Red Line and other metro
11 service.

12 You could raise bus fares in a
13 manner that is physically responsible and
14 financially consistent with revised
15 non-distance based metro fare proposal.
16 Increased public funding for public
17 infrastructure also seems appropriate.

18 Thank you.

19 (Applause)

20 MR. LINTON: Thank you very much.
21 Let me go through Caneisha Mills, Crystal
22 Kim, Esteban Olivares, Eugene Puryear, Liz

1 Lowengard, Peta Lindsay, Roger Scott, okay.
2 Sarah Friedman, Sunil Freeman, Tom Esbrook,
3 Matt Murray -- I like your humor. I had --
4 this is -- thank you. This is a group that's
5 -- a number of individuals who signup for
6 every hearing, but they haven't shown up yet.
7 So -- Ross Capon. Thanks, Ross.

8 MR. CAPON: Good evening, and thank
9 you for this opportunity. I am testifying on
10 behalf of National Association of Railroad
11 Passengers, which -- is a Washington citizen,
12 but I also am the cofounder of the Action
13 Committee for Transit, and a Bethesda
14 resident, and I certainly endorse what you
15 will hear later from the action committee
16 about the fact that gasoline taxes have not
17 increased once in the D.C., Maryland, or
18 Virginia over 14 years as metro fares have
19 risen four time, counting this one. So we
20 think there needs to be equity between
21 drivers and transit users.

22 I'll skip to -- well, thank you for

1 withdrawing the proposal for the surcharge on
2 downtown travel, which is kind of turning
3 London's sensible approach upside down.
4 We're glad that that was withdrawn. We
5 oppose elimination of the \$3 regional bus
6 pass, that's important for families,
7 low-income riders and student, and especially
8 families makes it attractive to give children
9 a transit experience, and if they have that
10 they're more likely to be your riders in
11 future generations. We have a similar
12 concern about the 20 percent very stiff
13 increase in the one-day rail pass. We urge
14 consideration of weekly and monthly rail
15 passes that are good 24/7 and perhaps priced
16 zonally.

17 We are concerned about the 23
18 percent or \$15 increase in the MARC VRE
19 Transit Link Card, which when you take it
20 together with VRE fares increases already
21 implemented and MARC fare increases, which
22 I'm afraid are around the corner if you

1 consider the budget situation in the state,
2 it seems prohibitive.

3 Paper bus transfers are essential,
4 at least so long as there is a charge for
5 SmartTrip cards. We understand that the
6 agency plans to eliminate that charge, but
7 this is not mentioned in the current notice.
8 Without free SmartTrip cards it is unfair to
9 inflict double penalties for using transfers,
10 that is you're confronted with a trip which
11 requires a change of bus because the bus
12 routes don't serve you, and you're forced to
13 pay for this privilege of "transferring."

14 My wife is a big stickler for
15 keeping the fare simple, so people don't have
16 to spend all day finding the change. This
17 raises the question, does it make sense to
18 eliminate bus tokens at the same time you're
19 raising the bus fare from a \$1.25 to a \$1.35?
20 How many dollars of gasoline and time are
21 going to be spent while people fumble for
22 that extra dime?

1 And finally, one non-fare issue,
2 and that is Bethesda style station area
3 development is crucial for attracting riders.
4 I've commuted from Silver Spring in Bethesda,
5 and there is no substitute for having a bus
6 waiting area that is completely protected
7 from snow and rain.

8 Thank you very much.

9 MR. LINTON: Thank you, Ross, for
10 your testimony.

11 Roger Plaut.

12 MR. PLAUT: Good evening. My name
13 is Roger Plaut. I live on Bauer Drive in
14 Rockville. I commute from my home in
15 Rockville to the campus of NIH, the medical
16 center stop, so I take the Ride On bus and
17 metro. The only comment I would make
18 specifically about my own situation is
19 echoing the comments of someone who spoke
20 earlier. It would be helpful if the subsidy
21 that's on my SmartTrip card would help me buy
22 a Ride On pass. It would save me about \$3 a

1 week, so that would help.

2 I know that you want us to help you
3 prioritize the proposed increases so you can
4 decide which ones are okay, and which ones
5 might need to be reduced. But I'm not going
6 to help you do that. I -- to me it's sort of
7 a divide and conquer, whether it's
8 intentional or not. Your pitting the --
9 those who travel long distances against those
10 who travel shorter distances. I heard
11 tonight, people who live in Montgomery County
12 versus those who live in Prince George's
13 County.

14 The point is that we need to
15 encourage transit use, and raising these
16 fares will not do that. And the main reason
17 that I'm here to talk to encourage you to do
18 that is because of two words, global warming.
19 I mean, we know how important it is in ever
20 way that we can to encourage people to drive
21 less and take public transit more. And as
22 you've heard tonight, many people will take

1 metro less if these increases go into place.

2 The big picture is that if we have
3 fewer people taking metro more people will be
4 driving. This will increase greenhouse
5 gases, will worsen traffic congestion -- and
6 something near and dear to my own heart --
7 will encourage those in power, in Maryland
8 and Virginia, to say, oh, we need more
9 highways. We need to build more highways,
10 which is heading in exactly the wrong
11 direction in terms of global warming. So
12 what we need to do is encourage mass transit
13 use.

14 So for you, the board, what does
15 this mean? Well, you need to do everything
16 you can to minimize the cost to the riders.
17 We've seen in some of the handouts today that
18 -- there was a statement that even with the
19 fare increases customers still will not pay
20 the full cost of their transportation. Well,
21 thank goodness we don't have to pay the full
22 cost. I mean that's why it's called public

1 transportation, right. The governments are
2 helping to subsidize, thank goodness.

3 In other areas, Los Angeles, riders
4 only pay 26 percent, in Massachusetts only 33
5 percent. And here we're paying 55 percent,
6 58 percent. So what you need to do is
7 everything you can to try to get the
8 governments to subsidize more. You need to
9 argue, you need to insist, you need to urge,
10 you need to beg, you need to lobby, you need
11 to do whatever you can to get these
12 governments to pay a larger portion of the
13 cost, of having first class metro system that
14 people will want to take, that more people
15 will take rather than fewer.

16 The only other thing I would say
17 is, if you tie the fare increases to a
18 transportation index, will the subsidies that
19 the governments are paying also be tied to
20 this transportation index, will they increase
21 to the same extent that the riders will be --
22 the fares will increase? And, you know, if

1 you tie that to the transportation index, as
2 someone mentioned, our salaries would not be
3 going up, so we'll paying a larger proportion
4 of our salaries for our commutes.

5 So, thank you.

6 (Applause)

7 MR. LINTON: Roger, thank you for
8 your comments. I think it's important to
9 note that we are also asking for increased
10 subsidies for the local governments as well
11 in the proposal. And quite frankly that is
12 not a given. It's not given that the
13 increases in our budget from local
14 governments that we've requested will be
15 there as well. And as you properly surmise
16 our structure, our cost structure is
17 supported by subsidies and fares, and that's
18 basically how we structure our budget. So if
19 in fact we don't get these subsidies
20 increased as well we are faced with this
21 issue of how do we continue to balance the
22 budget? We don't want to cut service. Once

1 again, that feeds into the same issue that
2 you mentioned, less service, less people will
3 be able to ride the system, and we increase
4 the car usage within this region, and we
5 can't afford to have that happen as well.

6 I think you will find that many of
7 us are quite sympathetic, and -- to your
8 concerns, and we would -- but we like to
9 continue to hear the comments that you're
10 making, and we want to have them on the
11 record. This is very, very important to a
12 lot of us to try to get a balanced approach
13 to this budget proposal. So we like to thank
14 you for that, and to continue to coming.

15 Judith Grominger. Sorry, Judith.

16 MS. GROMINGER: My name is Judith
17 Grominger. I'm at 8808 Manchester Road,
18 Silver Spring, Maryland. I used to commute
19 from Wheaton, Maryland to Crystal City. I
20 stopped because it was way too expensive. I
21 am actually borderline low-income, and for me
22 to commute within the county is better.

1 I agree with the bus increase at
2 the moment, because at the moment it's
3 affordable for me. I don't agree with the
4 rail increase. I've actually spoken with
5 some people working in the same building as
6 I, and they mentioned that if the rail
7 increase did go ahead as planned they would
8 no longer take the rail, they would instead
9 commute to save money, regardless of the gas
10 increase.

11 I also disagree with the parking
12 increase. I think it's already expensive to
13 make it more -- just make it prohibitive.
14 And that's all I have to say.

15 (Applause)

16 MR. LINTON: Thank you, Judith.
17 Steven Elmer.

18 MR. ELMER: Good evening,
19 gentleman, how are you doing? My name is
20 Steven Elmer. I live at 918 Eastern Avenue,
21 Northeast, Apartment 203, Washington, D.C.
22 20019. How are you doing ladies and

1 gentleman? Hey, I'm just a common man, and
2 I've been in this area for five-and-a-half
3 years. And when I lived here -- just living
4 here I noticed the increase, you know, in
5 2003, 2004, and I'm like, you know, what's
6 going on because, you know, I go to work
7 everyday. I live in Northeast D.C. I come
8 here to Rockville every single day. It cost
9 me approximately \$7 -- \$6 to \$7 every day.
10 And that -- in that -- that comes into my
11 budget living, you know -- not living the
12 best that I could. But however I come to
13 work, come home, and it seems like half of my
14 paycheck if not -- well, quarter to half of
15 my paycheck goes in the mail -- I mean, goes
16 in the metro.

17 And I was agreeing with the
18 gentleman right here that I believe there is
19 more subsidized -- government subsidize that
20 I feel that they could increase within the
21 metro instead of having to increase it with
22 our -- with the people, because we work

1 everyday, and it's just -- then you're going
2 to increase it, so, you know, where is my
3 next step where I'm going to live or
4 something, you know, am I going to live on
5 the street to get to work, then go -- I don't
6 live on the street, I'm just saying, you
7 know. All my bills will go in the metro just
8 to get to work. And I just feel that it's --
9 frankly, I don't think it's a good idea to
10 increase it because we're already struggling
11 as it is.

12 So, I feel that there needs to be
13 more subsidizing, you know, more help from
14 the government, local, federal governments
15 because it's affecting us. It's not going to
16 -- it's going to hurt everybody, not just the
17 struggling person, but it's going to hurt
18 everybody on -- all across the board. And I
19 feel that I don't think it's going to be
20 right to increase all this, increase the
21 money for us. I don't think it's going to --
22 you know, it's going to do worse. That's my

1 opinion. That's why I'm here, because I'm
2 very -- you know, I don't think that's -- I
3 don't think it's right.

4 You know, I understand we got to
5 pay taxes for this and that, but, you know, I
6 think -- you know, we need as a people -- we
7 need metro. But we feel like maybe we're a
8 hostage, you know, what I mean. We're like
9 we're hostages to metro, because we ain't got
10 no -- lot of us ain't got no choice. Some
11 feel like I'm backed up in a wall or
12 something, you know, pay, pay, pay, you know.
13 And a lot of people, I think, feel that way
14 too. So thanks again for listening to my
15 concerns. Appreciate it, thank you.

16 (Applause)

17 MR. LINTON: Steven, thank you for
18 coming out this evening and testifying.
19 Thank you.

20 Michael Sheib. Thank you.

21 MR. SHEIB: This letter will --
22 well, which I was about to write -- will

1 serve as -- to voice my opposition, not only
2 to the level of the proposed fare increase it
3 will also serve as a platform to voice my
4 serious concerns pertaining to metros lack of
5 regard towards commuters who wish to commute
6 using metro rail and metro bus. I am afraid
7 that if these increases are to take effect
8 more people will decide that despite the
9 prospects of \$4 a gallon gas the convenience
10 and independence of driving will offset
11 metros apparent advantages.

12 While it is true that the
13 Washington Metropolitan Area Transit
14 Authority offers a needed service to those
15 individuals like me who commute to D.C. from
16 areas such as Gaithersburg and do not own
17 cars, it is also true that the current level
18 of service is laughable. It's the only thing
19 I'm going to say on it which is related to
20 the fares.

21 It is inconceivable that during
22 rush hour trains to Shady Grove may be spaced

1 as much as 10 minutes apart. Why do we pay a
2 surcharge on fares during rush hour if we are
3 receiving off-peak service at peak hours?

4 (Applause)

5 MR. SHEIB: Additionally, the
6 inability for riders to purchase passes on a
7 SmartTrip card is a huge disincentive for us
8 to use one. I have calculated that given
9 normal commuting patterns I can save as much
10 as \$12 a week by using weekly passes as
11 opposed to paying with a SmartTrip card, that
12 the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit
13 Authority is forcing riders to switch from
14 Metrochecks to Smart Benefits without still
15 having the ability to purchase passes as
16 another way WMATA is meekly raising fares
17 from commuters this time, in my opinion,
18 without sufficient public comment.

19 As a private sector employee who
20 receives the Metrocheck benefits, I am
21 angered by metro's insistence on phasing out
22 Metrochecks without allowing you to purchase

1 passes, either metro rail, metro bus, or Ride
2 On. And I can't street Ride On, it's -- 60
3 percent -- lot of employers are phasing it
4 out as of the end of the year, and Ride On
5 passes are \$10 for two weeks as opposed to
6 \$11 a week for metro bus with my SmartTrip.

7 And so far as eliminating paper
8 transfers is concerned, this is problematic,
9 because currently I use a Ride On RideAbout
10 pass and on the few times I ride metro bus I
11 make sure to grab a paper transfer at the
12 metro station and pay \$0.35. I ought not be
13 denied this ability because I try to be savvy
14 with how I purchase my fares. Metro fares
15 are already very high, especially when
16 compared to New York City subways and
17 Baltimore's light rail. Metro is a subway
18 system, not a commuter rail. MARC is a
19 commuter rail. How do you think people are
20 going to react when they are told that the
21 trains will have fewer seats? The trains are
22 already full at Shady Grove.

1 I was under one -- under the -- one
2 of the impressions that metro's salient
3 points was that people could read on that
4 train instead of stressing in traffic. If
5 you're standing on a full train reading
6 becomes problematic. Something else to
7 consider is that my time is worth money, and
8 that my commute takes significantly longer by
9 a public transportation than would be the
10 case if I drove.

11 At some point, the combination of
12 the fare increase and my time will be more
13 valuable than the five hours a week that I
14 drive, kind of waste by using public
15 transportation. There will be a cost benefit
16 that will go in the direction of driving. At
17 that point scrimping and saving for a cheap
18 car may not be the worst idea in the world.

19 MR. LINTON: Thank you very much.

20 (Applause)

21 MR. LINTON: I believe this is
22 Vicki Gottlich.

1 MS. GOTTLICH: I'm Vicki Gottlich.
2 I live on Gatsby Terrace in Onley, Maryland.
3 Like everyone else in this room, I'm one of
4 the people who are going to be
5 disproportionately affected by the fare
6 increase. I will have to pay more for my
7 metro rail. I might go from either Glenmont
8 or Twinbrook to Farragut North.

9 I have to drive, because there is
10 no good bus service from where I live in
11 Onley. The regular metro bus is too far
12 away. And the Ride On bus doesn't run in
13 off- peak hours, and unfortunately, I
14 sometimes have to work very late. So I will
15 be adversely affected by increases in
16 parking. There are insufficient spots in the
17 Glenmont parking lot. As we all know if you
18 don't get there by 7:30, you can't get a
19 spot, yet your proposal is to reduce the
20 number of spots available at Glenmont by
21 increasing the number of reserved spots, and
22 to add insult to injury you're going to

1 increase the cost of the reserved spots. So
2 that is a triple whammy for people like me.

3 For those of us who live far out on
4 the Red Line we are already disserved, we
5 are paying more for less train service. We
6 have to wait for every other train. I had
7 complained several times to metro about this,
8 and I've been told that the folks in D.C.
9 don't want to have all the trains in the Red
10 Line go out, either to Shady Grove or to
11 Glenmont.

12 Well, I don't think I should be
13 paying more for half the service. So my
14 proposal to you is, not to increase fares
15 past Silver Spring and Grosvenor. If we're
16 not going to get the full amount of service,
17 we shouldn't be paying more than those people
18 who are getting the full amount of service.

19 You're already penalizing us by
20 increasing our parking fares. That's really
21 too much for all of us at this time. And so,
22 I would ask you to take a look, not punish

1 those of us who live far out with
2 insufficient service and bearing the brunt of
3 the fare increases. Thank you.

4 (Applause)

5 MR. LINTON: Vicki, thank you for
6 your testimony. It's very helpful.

7 Robin Marks.

8 MS. MARKS: Hello. My name is
9 Robin Marks. I live at 16520 Keiths Terrace
10 in Rockville. And I'm a daily rider who
11 parks at the Shady Grove Metro, and I take
12 the metro every single day. And
13 unfortunately, I don't have the option of
14 traveling during non-rush hour. I work for a
15 non- profit. I'm not rich. I would love
16 live closer in, but I can't afford it. Right
17 now it is cost-effective for me park at the
18 metro station, but that dynamic changes when
19 the cost is almost \$15 a day and not just for
20 me, but for many long distance riders. I'm
21 prepared to accept a fare increase, but it
22 seems quite unfair to have it

1 disproportionately fall on the riders who
2 ride the furthest and park. That's for us
3 it's a 20 -- more than a 20 percent increase
4 in parking fees and rail fares.

5 By contrast, bus fares will remain
6 lowest -- remain among the lowest in the
7 country or many will not change at all. And
8 it is very misleading -- I saw on the chart
9 -- to say that metro rail fares are the
10 lowest in the country. This is not true for
11 anyone in Montgomery County who rides during
12 rush hour.

13 What are my recommendations?
14 Because you asked for those. First of all, I
15 don't understand why off-peak fares are not
16 going to be changed at all. I don't
17 understand why bus fares are going to change
18 so little. And I also don't -- I read in the
19 paper that part of this increases to pay for
20 the Red Line turn back at Grosvenor-
21 Strathmore during off-peak hours. That is
22 needed during rush hour, not so much during

1 off-peak hours. And then I don't understand,
2 this is very modest, but I have no idea why
3 the Redskins game fee was completely
4 eliminated.

5 So anyway, I just appealed to you
6 to have some sympathy for those of us who
7 live further out and not put such a
8 disproportionate increase on us.

9 (Applause)

10 MR. LINTON: Thank you. We thank
11 you for your testimony.

12 Nathan Harrington.

13 MR. HARRINGTON: Good evening,
14 gentleman. My name is Nathan Harrington. I
15 live at 5210 Irigeis Street, College Park,
16 very near to the Greenbelt station. I teach
17 U.S. history to ninth graders in DuVal High
18 School in Prince George's County.

19 I came here of course to testify
20 against the fare increase. But all the
21 reasons why I'm against it have already been
22 stated quite eloquently. So what I came to

1 thinking was what is it that unites all of us
2 who are in this room. You gentleman up here
3 who obviously care a lot about this system,
4 and as you said, you sympathize with our
5 concerns, and I believe you that you do know,
6 you know, I sympathize with you all as well.

7 I wouldn't want to be in your
8 position, it's tough. But, you know, what
9 unites us all, you all -- those of us who
10 testified against the increase. And I don't
11 know if there is anyone here who is going to
12 testify in favor. I've noticed there are
13 some metro workers here. I don't know if
14 they're on the schedule to testify, I hope
15 they are. And I don't know what they're
16 going to say.

17 But I will say that as a teacher,
18 of course, I'm a member of the union, and we
19 demand better pay and conditions and so
20 forth. As of course the metro workers do as
21 well. And I'm in solidarity with them when
22 they do so. But as teachers, in teachers

1 unions we don't promote our own interest by
2 saying, oh, well, the students and the
3 parents would have to pay more. We
4 understand that public education is a public
5 good. And that we want to encourage people
6 to send their children to school. If they
7 don't, it causes problems for society as a
8 whole.

9 Likewise, it causes problems in our
10 community when we have excess of congestion
11 on the roads, and pollution, and so forth.
12 So everything that's already been said about
13 the need to incentivise metro use will
14 disincentivising driving, particularly long
15 distance driving is very much on point.

16 So you asked for solutions. If we
17 want to have good service, and pay the
18 workers decently, and have a balanced budget,
19 what's the alternative without raising fares?
20 It's already been mentioned, and
21 unfortunately, it's something that you
22 gentlemen don't have the power to do. And

1 that is, increase the public subsidies from
2 the state of Maryland, from the state of
3 Virginia, from the District of Columbia, from
4 the relevant counties, as well as for the
5 federal government.

6 So my message actually for everyone
7 else here tonight, don't make tonight be your
8 only night of speaking out against this fare
9 increase. Go to Annapolis, go to the
10 Montgomery Council, go to your congressman,
11 because these people recently found billions
12 of dollars for the Intercounty Connector,
13 which of course incentivises people to drive
14 long distances.

15 We need to encourage them to put
16 more money into the system. They need to
17 raise the gas tax so that those driving cars
18 long distances are subsidizing those of us
19 who use transit, and not the other way
20 around. Thank you.

21 (Applause)

22 MR. LINTON: Nathan, let me thank

1 you for your testimony. I would add that I
2 would think many of you might have been
3 watching in Annapolis in the last several
4 days where in fact there is an effort to deal
5 with transportation. And quite frankly, the
6 governor has made an effort to try to raise
7 additional revenues because the trust fund
8 which contributes to the subsidization of the
9 metro system, in addition to the money that's
10 needed to build the Purple Line and other
11 projects that people in this region want,
12 requires some additional revenues into that
13 trust fund in order to be able to do that.
14 So that's going to require a tax increase in
15 order to accommodate that.

16 So there are issues that are
17 outside this room that really does have an
18 impact on our ability, one, to get the
19 subsidies that we need to continue to get
20 from the state of Maryland, but also to
21 continue to provide the support so that we
22 don't have to continue to raise fares.

1 And we can't get the capital money
2 we need to get new rail cars and deal some of
3 the capital issues that are affecting the
4 service that many of you are talking about
5 this evening on the Red Line. So there are
6 issues that, one we're both aware of, and
7 there are processes out there with the
8 general public and the legislative bodies
9 that hopefully will allow us to move forward
10 with some relief on those areas. With that
11 -- Peter.

12 MR. BENJAMIN: Nathan, I very much
13 appreciate what you said because you put the
14 burden where the burden belongs. Those of us
15 who are on the board, as I said before, we
16 don't want to raise fares. We have to find a
17 way to balance the budget. There is a limit
18 to how much the local jurisdictions can
19 contribute. As some of you have said, they
20 contribute about 45 percent of the cost.
21 Revenues cover the other 55 percent. Fares
22 are the largest part of those revenues.

1 If we want to change that balance,
2 that's something that's got to be done by
3 each one of you, not just by us. It's got to
4 be done by you working with your local
5 legislatures in trying to find ways to
6 increase the concern in the state
7 legislatures and the local governments in --
8 over the subsidies that are provided for
9 public transportation, because that's really
10 where the effort has got to be. And those
11 are the people that have to do it.

12 So Nathan, you're absolutely right
13 to call for everybody to keep working on
14 exactly that issue.

15 MR. LINTON: Jim Madaras.

16 MR. MADARAS: My name is Jim
17 Madaras, I am a Rockville resident, and I am
18 a Metro worker. I've been a Metro worker for
19 24 years. I've actually -- just to give you
20 all little bit of an understanding; I went to
21 Grade School here in St. Mary's right up the
22 street here.

1 And I remember sitting in the
2 classroom, watching the CSX trains go by
3 every day, and I used to think, boy that
4 would really be something to be able to ride
5 on those tracks there. And I think God heard
6 my call there, and I'd be riding up and down
7 those tracks now for 24 years.

8 But my point is this. I've watched
9 all the area here grow substantially. I
10 mean, I was born in D.C. I was raised right
11 here in Rockville. I work here at Rockville
12 providing you all what you want everyday. My
13 family has greatly suffered over the years
14 because of the amount of commitment that I've
15 had to give to the Metro system.

16 But I wish that Metro was free. I
17 wish that the subsidies were so great that
18 everyone would ride the system for free, and
19 pay for it whether you ride it or not. And
20 I'll tell you why. If anybody has lived here
21 for the length of time that I have, you've
22 watched a lot of dead property, most

1 specifically we are talking about some of the
2 stations here, Grosvenor, right outside of
3 Grosvenor that property where Grosvenor was
4 and going down the hill thereby Tuckerman
5 Lane, that was worthless property until Metro
6 came there.

7 And I went down the street there
8 when they were building those condos, and I
9 asked how much they were selling for, and
10 they said \$6- to \$900,000 a piece. And I
11 said, wow, I said to the lady who was selling
12 them, I said how many have you sold? She
13 said, I got three left. Then I thought wow,
14 that was because of Metro.

15 Everywhere you go, within the close
16 proximity of the rail stations Metro -- the
17 economics of real estate properties that have
18 developed in and around the Metro stations
19 has been phenomenal, and I can tell you that
20 from the Metro workers standpoint.

21 I think that those people, who
22 build those properties around those areas,

1 should be taxed appropriately because they
2 benefited from what I've done and what all
3 the rest of the workers at Metro have done.
4 We don't want to see fares increased.

5 And we do want to see people pay
6 appropriately as employees because what
7 happens is as you all get frustrated, and
8 then when you ride the system and you see us
9 working there, well you -- you vent your
10 frustrations out on us, you know.

11 And I sit there and watch the trash
12 fires, and so forth. Well, I would encourage
13 people to maybe try to put some of the trash
14 in the canisters, so it doesn't boil down the
15 track, and then the arching catches the
16 papers on fire, and we have track fires.

17 I am getting off a little bit on a
18 tangent. But I wanted to say one other
19 thing. I remember also before I started
20 working at Metro, I used to work for the
21 Washington Post, and I used to drive up
22 Connecticut Avenue --

1 MR. LINTON: I am going to have to
2 ask you to --

3 MR. MADARAS: I promise you, I'll
4 stop.

5 MR. LINTON: And I love your
6 testimony actually, but I am -- I have to be
7 official here tonight. So I have to bring it
8 to a closure.

9 MR. MADARAS: Well, I just want to
10 say one thing, that as Metro employees, and
11 we talk about the fare increases, I mean, the
12 fare increases related to the passengers.
13 We've taken the brunt of a lot of the
14 frustration through the media, and a lot of
15 the information that's being represented from
16 the employees' standpoint has been incorrect.

17 And when it's published, and it is
18 incorrect, most specifically in some of the
19 papers that are circulated outside the Metro
20 stations, no one counters that information
21 and makes it straight. So what happens is,
22 is that the image of the workers is

1 distorted. So the frustration of the
2 passengers here is, my fares are going up
3 because of the employees. The employees
4 aren't getting a fare shake, and I would --

5 MR. LINTON: And I would like to
6 discuss that with you offline, and I actually
7 can tell you a number of distortions in the
8 newspapers, but we share in that frustration.
9 And I actually applaud our employees, and we
10 do it all the time. And we recognize both
11 the stress that you are under, but your
12 ability to continue to provide good service.

13 And unfortunately, the minority
14 that's covered in the newspapers seems to
15 reflect broad-brush through all our
16 employees. And that's not the nature of the
17 employees that we have to serve the system.
18 But I am going to have to, at this point --

19 MR. MADARAS: With this one final
20 comment right here, Rockville, all this
21 lucrative real estate development that's
22 occurred here in the last two years is

1 because of what we do at Metro. They should
2 be paying for it.

3 (Applause)

4 MR. LINTON: Thank you. I think
5 Montgomery County Council has been dealing
6 with some of those issues most recently in
7 the last couple of days.

8 Is this Mike Laughton?

9 (No response)

10 MR. LINTON: I am trying to -- Jeff
11 Onger.

12 (No response)

13 MR. LINTON: Kenneth Zwick.

14 MR. ZWICK: My name is Kenneth
15 Zwick, I live at --

16 SPEAKER: Microphone.

17 MR. ZWICK: Oh Sorry. My name is
18 Kenneth Zwick, I live at 9316, Westcott Place
19 in Rockville. Thank you very much for the
20 opportunity to speak tonight. I wanted to
21 address one aspect of the fare increase that
22 I haven't heard anybody else mention, and I

1 am hoping that this is -- that I am either
2 misunderstanding it or that Rock -- that
3 Metro has made a big mistake. Because it
4 just seems so out of whack.

5 What I am referring to is the
6 proposed increase to \$1 an hour for parking
7 meters. I take the Metro everyday from
8 Rockville to Archives, and by the time I get
9 to Rockville, the lot adjacent to the station
10 is full. So instead, I park in the lot
11 across the street on the east side of
12 Rockville Pike, north of Middle Lane, where
13 there are probably about 70 or 80 parking
14 meters.

15 That lot never fills up. In fact,
16 it's probably about half full at peak. I
17 don't know why. Right now, I pay \$3 to park
18 there for nine hours, it is \$0.75 for 45
19 minutes, I think it works out to. Under the
20 proposal, instead of paying \$3 per day, I'd
21 be paying \$9 per day.

22 I think that's a larger increase

1 than anybody tonight has mentioned for
2 anything, and there's got to be something
3 wrong there, I hope you have an explanation.
4 You sound like you got -- you look like you
5 do.

6 Anyway I think that I don't object
7 to an -- at the risk of incurring the wrath
8 of a lot of people in this room, I don't
9 object to the fare increase in general. I
10 think it's reasonable, and I think it is
11 necessary; it's just a fact of life that over
12 time prices are going to go up.

13 But it doesn't seem reasonable to
14 me that I should be incurring an extra \$6 per
15 day or \$1,200 per year. I hope that there is
16 something wrong with my understanding of that
17 proposal or whoever came up with it in the
18 first place. Thank you very much.

19 MR. LINTON: Thank you, Ken. Ben
20 Ross.

21 MR. ROSS: Hi, I am Ben Ross. I am
22 the president -- the vice president of the

1 Action Committee for Transit. We are the
2 largest transit rider's organization in the
3 Washington area with almost 1,000 members in
4 Montgomery County. And I am here to speak
5 about these fare increases that we think are
6 a big, big mistake.

7 I'd like to applaud Gordon Linton
8 and Peter Benjamin for what they said a few
9 minutes ago. They are not the ultimate
10 decision makers about how much money Metro
11 gets.

12 And I would like to encourage
13 everyone here to write to their legislators.
14 We have leaflets that are on the table
15 outside that give you a web address where you
16 can get the names and e-mail addresses of all
17 your representatives in the state
18 legislature.

19 They are meeting right now, and as
20 we sit here they are talking about the budget
21 including transportation funding. And so
22 this is an ideal time to tell them that

1 transportation funding has to be fair to
2 transit riders.

3 We have had -- since 1993, this
4 will be the fourth increase in Metro fares
5 while there has not been a single increase in
6 the gas tax. Not only has the gas tax not
7 gone up, but in reality the user fee that's a
8 -- paid by drivers has gone down, because
9 there's effectively a subsidy to driving
10 because gasoline is exempt from the sales
11 tax.

12 Now when gas was \$1 a gallon and
13 the sales tax was percent, so that's a nickel
14 you didn't pay in sales tax, and you are
15 paying \$0.235 in gas tax. You are still
16 paying \$0.185 extra to support the road
17 network.

18 Now we are going to have \$3
19 gasoline, 6 percent sales tax that's 18
20 percent that the driver is effectively being
21 subsidized, and the amount that the driver is
22 paying to support the roads over and above

1 the sales tax that they would pay no matter
2 whether they spent the money on gasoline or
3 restaurants or whatever is only \$0.055 a
4 gallon, so it's only really a quarter of what
5 they were paying back in 1993.

6 And meanwhile the Metro fare has
7 been going up, and this will be the fourth
8 time. So I would urge everyone here to write
9 to their legislators. Let me just say one
10 more thing that in some of the newspaper --

11 MR. LINTON: And Ben, I hope that's
12 related to the fare increase.

13 MR. ROSS: Yes, yes. About -- the
14 newspapers that have been mentioned recently
15 are saying, don't give Metro more money until
16 it gives you better service. Well, the way
17 you are going to get better service is for
18 Metro to have more money.

19 You know, like every organization
20 -- every big organization there's things that
21 aren't as efficient as they could be, and
22 when you find them, point them out to these

1 people, and I am sure they'll try to do what
2 they can about them. But realistically, more
3 money means better service. Thank you.

4 (Applause)

5 MR. LINTON: Ben, I am glad I
6 didn't cut you off for that last comment.

7 Mike Rabkin.

8 MR. RABKIN: I am Mike Rabkin, 9,
9 Escandia Way in Rockville, Maryland, 20850.
10 I've been listening to everybody and a lot of
11 points were made that I was going to make, so
12 I'll cut those out, because they've been
13 said. But one thing that hasn't been said is
14 that in the past the increases you've had
15 have been more moderate. So they didn't
16 really change as much for people's commuting
17 costs.

18 This one, I am hearing from a lot
19 of people, could hit that breaking point
20 where people start to say it's no longer
21 worth using Metro. And the point of public
22 transportation is to get cars off the road,

1 and provide transportation for those who
2 can't afford other means.

3 I am not speaking for myself, but I
4 know that is the purpose. So they've gotten
5 away with it till now, but honestly, people
6 will start to look at other means. And one
7 I've heard that comes up a lot is carpooling.

8 There's even organizations out
9 there, I've heard, that help organize
10 carpoolers. Some even give points that you
11 can get as -- to redeem at retailers. So you
12 know, the joke is you know, what incentive
13 would you be providing me in competition to
14 that because there is competition. And you
15 know, that's a joke, but honestly, I'd be
16 with reliable and timely service for starters
17 to say at least there's that, and you are
18 supporting the system that's in place.

19 One solution obviously is
20 government subsidies, you know. Less cars on
21 the road means less wear and tear on the road
22 that means local governments won't have to

1 fix them. There'd be less accidents because
2 there's more potential of more cars, they end
3 up bearing some of the costs of that.

4 There's uninsured motorists, there is medical
5 costs. You can point all this out to these
6 governments, and we should too.

7 But really, you know, I wonder if
8 there's a way to try hard and let them know
9 exactly what this is going to cost them,
10 sometimes the obvious has to be pointed out.
11 You mentioned its not a given that
12 governments will give subsidies. I hope you
13 guys understand this time especially, its not
14 a given that riders will be maintaining
15 ridership with these increases either. And
16 I'm not sure that that's clear, because this
17 one is different.

18 One other solution is, are you
19 maximizing advertising revenue? I mean, I
20 know we like the looks of the station that's
21 like an art gallery. I've heard all the
22 talk, but guess what, you know, I want -- if

1 you got a plaster as everywhere on the
2 trains, in the trains, in the tunnels with
3 that whole light system you have, which I've
4 yet to see. In the stations, hey, if it
5 keeps the cost down, I bet you there's going
6 to be very little outcry, you know, in the
7 end, because in the end it's working people
8 who need to get to work.

9 And you know, that's basically,
10 yeah, you know, and one thing I just noticed
11 is, when you mention rail cost in other
12 cities like New York that you know, work
13 cheaper, I can't speak for cities other than
14 New York, but yeah, it's \$2 and that's it.
15 You can go across all of New York for \$2 and
16 get a lot further, you know, on a small
17 salary.

18 So I don't know if you meant to be
19 deceiving about it, but I have to wonder what
20 else are they trying to hope people don't
21 notice, you know, by saying those kind of
22 things because I happen to know that and

1 there might be other things too.

2 So -- and I am definitely against
3 the parking fees because you are going to
4 just make a lot of people unhappy, and it
5 will be that much more unaffordable and
6 that's the everyday rider who is going to get
7 hurt. Thank you.

8 MR. LINTON: Thank you.

9 (Applause)

10 MR. LINTON: Caesar Rorie.

11 MR. RORIE: Good evening gentlemen,
12 it's kind of obvious who I work for --

13 MR. LINTON: Really, Caesar.

14 MR. RORIE: But this is my personal
15 time. And what has happened is -- just from
16 my personal observations, I'd like to bring
17 to the attention of the Board perhaps a facet
18 that has not been addressed, and could be
19 easily looked at. And that is in the form of
20 lost revenue.

21 And I speak of lost revenue, a few
22 people touched on it, is in the form of the

1 transfers. I ride the bus everyday and I see
2 the misuse and abuse of transfers in terms of
3 -- I see a bus operator would pass a transfer
4 to a person, and even at the front door they
5 would give their transfer to another person.

6 And specifically, if it says you
7 cannot pass or receive a transfer from a
8 person, it says, \$1.25 does not go into that
9 fare box. I've seen personally, transfer is
10 taped together in a way to escape you know,
11 the paying of the fare, and it just bugs me
12 to knowing that this is taking place.

13 And you know, Metro I think, needs
14 to address it because how many buses are on
15 the road everyday on a daily basis that this
16 is taking place on an hourly basis, not just
17 you know, the blocks that the operators have.

18 So what my proposal is, is either
19 completely eliminate the transfers or charge
20 for the transfers again. Because Metro had
21 done it before, and they stopped it for, I
22 guess for, you know, whatever reason. So --

1 and people are not going to give away
2 something that they pay for, and you know,
3 that's just human nature.

4 And so I would recommend to the
5 Board at least to look at that particular
6 aspect of revenue lost and recovery. So the
7 folks there tonight won't have to pay as much
8 if something, because everything goes up gas,
9 food, you know, electric, it's just a world
10 we are living in.

11 But if we could just, you know,
12 stop the bleeding, because if you are living
13 in a house that is flooded, you are not going
14 to grab a mug and bucket. You are going to
15 just try to, you know, patch up that hole and
16 keep the water from coming in. And then you
17 can address the problem as it goes.

18 So just as a personal observation
19 from me, I ask the board to please consider
20 that. Thank you.

21 MR. LINTON: Wow.

22 (Applause)

1 MR. LINTON: I want to thank you
2 for your testimony, and thank you for taking
3 time in addition to the time you put in
4 everyday to come to share that with us.

5 MR. BENJAMIN: And Caesar, just
6 wanted to let you know, you've already been
7 heard, one of the elements in this is to get
8 rid of transfers. One of the elements in the
9 proposal that's in front of you, you've
10 already been heard, is to get rid of
11 transfers. So you gave some testimony
12 supporting that idea.

13 (Laughter)

14 MR. LINTON: Jeff Labow.

15 MR. LABOW: Hi, everyone my name is
16 Jeff. I've been riding Metro in the bus for
17 a while now. I currently work -- I am not
18 out of school, I graduated high school. My
19 main concern is that Richard A. White, the
20 former head of Metro after he left, got a six
21 figure income.

22 And that really bothers me, because

1 we are having to pay for Richard A. White's
2 six figure income after he's left, after he
3 left Metro in shambles, I don't think that's
4 right. I don't think we should have to pay
5 that. I think one of the things that we
6 could easily do is cut off funding to him.
7 You know, he doesn't deserve money; he should
8 have to be paying us.

9 And I think the Board of directors
10 should cut their salaries down and increase
11 the worker's salaries. The bus drivers and
12 the, you know, maintenance workers, all those
13 people if they are getting more money they
14 are going to provide us with better service.

15 I don't see the board of directors
16 driving the buses, driving the trains, fixing
17 the tracks. I don't know exactly what they
18 do sitting in an office, they talk about
19 raising the fares for people like me, and all
20 these people in the room, and a lot of these
21 people cannot afford it, I can't.

22 For a while I would ride buses

1 exclusively, which took a lot more time, so I
2 had to take more time in my day to take the
3 buses, because Metro is getting expensive.
4 It's pretty simple, you know, don't increase
5 the fares for buses, for rail, don't get rid
6 of transfers.

7 And one other thing that simple --
8 switch the buses that are run on diesel to
9 biodiesel. Take the used grease from
10 McDonald's and Chinese food restaurants, and
11 there are tons of those in the district take
12 all that extra grease put it in the bus.

13 That saves you a whole lot of money
14 because they'll give it away for free. It
15 costs them like \$60 to get rid of it. So
16 they are happy to, you know, just put it on
17 in a bucket and give to you. They might even
18 transport it for you.

19 So you know, that also helps the
20 environment, you know, we need to take care
21 of our planet. And I don't have money for a
22 car, but if Metro is going to keep increasing

1 the fares and decreasing the service, I might
2 have to think about getting a junk car, and
3 driving that. I don't want to do that,
4 because I don't have that kind of money to
5 maintain a car.

6 So stop funding Richard A. White;
7 cut the board of directors' salaries; raise
8 the workers' salaries, you know, to a living
9 wage, if not even higher, and switch to
10 biodiesel. Thank you.

11 (Applause)

12 MR. LINTON: I don't want to bring
13 on any lawsuits, but let me just -- Jeff, was
14 actually our last registered speaker for the
15 night. I see a young lady is being stressed
16 back there.

17 SPEAKER: (Off mike)

18 MR. LINTON: Okay. I didn't see
19 your name on the list.

20 SPEAKER: (Off mike)

21 MR. LINTON: Please come forward.
22 We are going to have you come forward,

1 absolutely.

2 Thank you kids for hanging in there
3 with us.

4 MS. TILDON: I am Rhonda Tildon. I
5 live in Silver Spring 13832, Turnmore Road.
6 I am a single mom, and it's a lot for me to
7 get my kids to school and get myself to work
8 on time. And in terms of the increase, you
9 know, for me personally, what I pay is \$6.50
10 round trip, because I go from Glenmont to
11 Judiciary Square, in D.C.

12 And the D.C. government, for me
13 does not pay a transit subsidy, so it's on
14 me. D.C. government employees we are only
15 getting a 4 percent increase in our raise
16 this year, and for me when it goes up, it
17 would mean \$416.02 more each year, which for
18 me is 25 percent increase.

19 It's just -- I am not making enough
20 to keep up with that. That's why personally,
21 I wish that the increase if it -- if there
22 must be one, I wish it were flatter in terms

1 of people, who no matter who you are, no
2 matter where you live, if it could be equal,
3 you know, something more equal, a flatter
4 tax.

5 One of the things just -- I don't
6 know if you realize that one of the impacts
7 of the train being late on the Red Line for
8 me is that I have to take an hour of annual
9 leave. If I am later than 15 minutes, I must
10 take the full hour and that annual leave when
11 you -- when you are a single mother with
12 kids, you get sick all the time. That means
13 I -- you know, it's just a -- it's a greater
14 stress that's cash money.

15 When I left the federal government,
16 I had to pay them money because I dipped and
17 borrowed so much sick leave because of the
18 kids. So it -- I mean there is, you know, it
19 costs a lot of money, for me to take the
20 Metro when it's going to be late, and I have
21 to take annual leave.

22 I might as well drive frankly. I

1 might as well, you know, commute with a
2 carpool or find some other way. It is not
3 cost effective for me to park at Glenmont
4 Metro, because when I park there, I have to
5 get there so much earlier, I can't get my
6 kids ready to school. I have to burden my
7 mother who lives with me.

8 It is much easier, if you all would
9 have more parking spaces at Glenmont. It's
10 easier then for me to then drive to Wheaton,
11 see if there is an empty space at Wheaton.
12 If it's not, then I've got to drive to Silver
13 Spring.

14 You know, I am driving closer and
15 closer and closer to get, so.

16 MR. LINTON: I am smiling because I
17 do that myself.

18 MS. TILDON: So it's, you know, you
19 got a -- I understand you all have burdens.
20 I understand you have to make decisions, but
21 think about the single mothers, single people
22 who really -- this is a lot of money for us.

1 It's a lot of money. Thank you for your
2 time.

3 MR. LINTON: Thank you.

4 (Applause)

5 MR. LINTON: Thank you for waiting
6 and thank your kids for hanging in with us
7 well. I do think now that is our last
8 speaker, for this evening, let me personally
9 --

10 SPEAKER: (Off mike)

11 MR. LINTON: Well, the procedure
12 was to have you sign in, and we were calling
13 those that were on the list.

14 SPEAKER: (Off mike)

15 SPEAKER: I thought you were taking
16 speakers that were not on the list -- that's
17 what we were told.

18 MR. BENJAMIN: No, actually what we
19 said was, if you are not already on the list,
20 please sign in. So we have one person
21 signing in. If there is anybody else out
22 there who wishes to speak, please sign in

1 with Ms. Chambliss. And we'll go ahead and
2 hear you.

3 MR. LINTON: And for the record, I
4 was -- I've been giving names as they were
5 signing in to the list and those were the
6 people that I was calling. So we were taking
7 people here, who had not sent their names in
8 earlier.

9 Would you identify yourself, as I
10 don't have your name in front of me, I can't
11 do that.

12 MR. AWRICH: Good evening, I am
13 Howard Awrich; I live at 14515 Cartwright Way
14 in North Potomac.

15 MR. LINTON: Thank you, Howard.
16 You may begin.

17 MR. AWRICH: Thank you. What I
18 would like to say is that as I view this
19 increase, it is to me, in disguise, a
20 commuter tax. The way it's proposed with
21 Montgomery County, rush-hour fares paying the
22 vast majority of it.

1 I've got to say, personally
2 speaking, I am very disappointed in my Board
3 -- Metro board members from Maryland and
4 Virginia for basically letting the D.C. as I
5 have read in the Examiner in Eldridge's
6 column, to say, we are not going to go with
7 any fare increase that's going to hit our
8 D.C. residents, and you guys will have to
9 just pick up the slack.

10 I think they you let them get --
11 they bullied you. And you let them do it.
12 To say that no increase for bus riders -- and
13 I know that there are some that, many that
14 don't have a high income, but they are as
15 you've heard there are also some of the
16 suburbs that don't have high income.

17 And they've tried to do commuter
18 taxes through various methods, most of them
19 through payroll or through toll roads, most
20 of the things that high-income people pay.
21 Well, not too many CEOs ride the Metro, as
22 I've noticed. So this seems to be like

1 they've said, let's try this.

2 And all the focus from the pay
3 parking that, the rush-hour fares, let's also
4 reserve more spaces to further bill these
5 people that have they don't want to get there
6 at 7:30 they are going to have to pay even
7 more to reserve a space, that just doesn't
8 strike me as right.

9 I think that you need to go back to
10 the D.C. Members of the board, and say, we
11 just can't look at our people that were
12 representing and say, pay 20 plus percent,
13 all of your bus riders get off with the 0
14 percent increase because they are using the
15 SmarTrip card as most of our riders are
16 already are, because that's how we want them
17 to leave the Metro lots everyday.

18 So that's my take as far as raising
19 some revenues, I think that there's a little
20 bit of a disproportionate increase during the
21 rush-hour. Again I would consider increasing
22 the non-rush-hour fares, nothing is popular

1 but everyone has got to do it. The days that
2 the lot fees are imposed have been
3 increasing, you know, more holidays.

4 I think the time has come
5 basically, about holiday except for
6 Christmas, I mean, if the fares are going up
7 they got to go up, if they are going on the
8 weekends they got to park, pay to park on the
9 weekends.

10 Everyone doing their share, if it
11 comes from more varied places, you can lower
12 the burden on us, maybe up to the high teens,
13 but to say that this is the way we've got to
14 go to really melt the golden calf, that much
15 further I think at some point the calf dies.
16 Thank you.

17 MR. LINTON: Thank you, Howard.
18 Let me just -- you know I spent 11 years in
19 the legislation we used to say there's a
20 truth, there's whole truth and there is
21 nothing but the truth. Sometimes what you
22 read in the newspaper is the truth, but it's

1 not the whole truth.

2 And there are elements of that that
3 you just suggested that does not reflect the
4 real effort here to get a balance fare. You
5 have a proposal before you and we are
6 listening for your testimony. I don't want
7 you to think that there's uniform support,
8 for the proposal as there is today.

9 And I think if you've got your
10 hands on some of the comments that were at
11 the board meeting for the representatives
12 from Virginia and Maryland and likewise, you
13 will hear and see where our position is. So
14 I'll talk to you offline about that.

15 MR. AWRICH: Thank you. I just --
16 one other point that I just remembered that
17 in Steve Eldridge's comment he said, if this
18 fare increase goes through as proposed the
19 Shady Grove passenger will pay the highest
20 public fare daily in the country.

21 I don't know if that's true, but at
22 least that's what he had said; it would be

1 the highest in the country. And we are not
2 -- while we are a high-cost living area, I
3 don't believe we are the highest in the
4 country.

5 MR. LINTON: Thank you.

6 MR. AWRICH: Thank you for your
7 time.

8 MR. LINTON: Thank you. Joseph
9 Bradley.

10 MR. BRADLEY: Your name is Howard?

11 MR. AWRICH: Yeah --

12 MR. BRADLEY: My testimony is going
13 to be very similar to yours.

14 For the record I attended several
15 other board meetings that you are referring
16 to, and I heard the comments from the various
17 board members. My purpose here isn't that of
18 hurling accusation at you wonderful men.
19 Please understand that right upfront.

20 But however, I do wish to speak on
21 the seeming unfairness of imposing the
22 greatest burden on the greater distance

1 riders such as those that live in Maryland
2 and Virginia, and equally imposing very
3 costly burdens on those who park in the lots
4 before they board the trains.

5 Do we feel picked on? Yes, we do.
6 Do we feel singled out? Yes, we do. Do the
7 board members care? Well, that depends on
8 who the board members are. And I heard the
9 testimony in the board meetings several of
10 them.

11 And so once again, for example, Jim
12 Graham of D.C., says as long as his
13 jurisdiction only pays 1 dime for fare
14 increases; that is fair for him. And I heard
15 the testimony, but again my purpose here is
16 not to -- not to cast blame, but to speak of
17 the unfairness of these increases, for the
18 greater distance riders.

19 And the additional cost of parking
20 our cars in the lots before we board the
21 trains. And that has to do with the outlined
22 jurisdictions while D.C. is going basically

1 scot-free outside of that 10 cents fare
2 increase for the buses.

3 Now, Jim is happy, wonderful, but
4 what about the outlying areas. That has not
5 been properly addressed in terms of the
6 fairness. Yes, we do feel singled out. Yes,
7 we do feel picked on. And it isn't fair and
8 it isn't right.

9 Yes, I am upset. Yes, I am upset,
10 but think about what I've just what I just
11 spoke to you about, the fairness of it, the
12 equity of it, it just isn't there. That's
13 what I am speaking of. And no matter how you
14 color it, it isn't fair.

15 MR. LINTON: Cary Abend.

16 MR. ABEND: My name is Cary Abend,
17 I live in Montgomery Village. I have lived
18 in and around the D.C. and Montgomery County
19 areas for the last 20 years. So I have been
20 both a resident of D.C., a resident of
21 Montgomery County. I have driven to work
22 when it was necessary, I have walked to work

1 when it was possible, and I currently I do
2 take Metro. I am a full-fare maximum
3 distance customer.

4 It strikes me that the -- some of
5 the reasoning at least given in the handouts
6 today, for the fare increases wasn't
7 completely representative of what's going on.
8 Indicating that we pay among the lowest fares
9 in the country seems a little misleading to
10 me. You know, yes; they pay \$2 for every
11 where in Los Angeles, at New York a couple of
12 other places, and we certainly don't do that
13 here.

14 So representing that the lowest
15 base fare as a justification for why we
16 should increase things seems a little
17 off-target to me. Indicating that we've had
18 300 percent increase in fuel costs also seems
19 a little-off target, that's 300 percent since
20 1993, that's 14 years worth of increases,
21 equates to 300 percent.

22 If you had told me that it was 300

1 percent in the last 3 years, which were -- 4
2 years which was the last fare increase, maybe
3 I'd be a little more sympathetic to a fare
4 increase. My calculations indicate that's a
5 roughly 10 percent -- less than ten percent
6 about eight point something percent per year
7 since 1993.

8 I can actually swallow that as a
9 commuter. I appreciate the fact that the
10 board has not seen fit to raise the fares
11 appropriately in that time. But I think it's
12 grossly unfair to try to make up for it all
13 at once, in one fell swoop.

14 And that definitely seems, if I can
15 use the term "blood sucking" you know, if you
16 are going to increase the fare, you know, 5
17 percent or 10 percent as a yearly increase
18 that's a little easy on budget, it's going 20
19 percent all at once, at a minimum for certain
20 things is really, really hard to swallow.

21 Couple of other ideas about making
22 a flat fee across all ridership like other

1 cities have, one thing that I don't think
2 I've ever seen anywhere is what is the daily
3 average Metro fare cost per user. Now I
4 don't know what that is. I know that I pay
5 390 each way, every day, both ways. And then
6 if I go downtown a short trip it's a \$35.

7 So somewhere between there is what
8 Metro collects per customer. That might be a
9 place to start to think about what do we
10 increase, if we increased that by 10 percent
11 then there'd be a place to begin that
12 everyone would be hopefully feel a little
13 more equitable. And that's all I have to
14 say. Thank you very much.

15 (Applause)

16 MR. LINTON: Thank you. And
17 Vernetta Gaines.

18 MS. GAINES: Hello, my name is
19 Vernetta Gaines and I also live in Montgomery
20 Village. And I don't want to repeat what's
21 been said here, I mean, it'd be beating a
22 dead horse, but I do have two issues with the

1 fare increase.

2 Your statement that this is about
3 fare increases and not service, they are
4 connected, you know, they are connected for a
5 lot of people. A lot of people would digest
6 that the increase is a lot better, if the
7 service was better.

8 You know, just like, you go and
9 ride a plane, you could pay a lot in first
10 class, you know, but you are getting better
11 service up there, So you are paying that
12 fare. But you are getting the same -- you
13 are going on the same plane, with the people
14 who are riding in -- in our economy class.
15 Service and the fare increases, they are
16 connected, no matter what you guys say.

17 And number two, I want a clear
18 explanation why the non-peak fares were not
19 increased. There -- I mean, you guys showed
20 that to us like that's an advantage, but that
21 doesn't pertain to the people who commute
22 from the suburbs into the city. And I would

1 just like an explanation why it was decided
2 that non -- the non-peak fares would not be
3 raised. What's the justification for it?
4 Thank you.

5 (Applause)

6 MR. LINTON: Jeffrey Neal. Jeffrey
7 Neal, Noel -- I am sorry, Jeffery Noel.

8 MR. NOEL-NOSBAUM: I actually just
9 have a very short comment to add to everybody
10 else' at the end here. I will be sending in
11 a more complete comment later, after I've had
12 a chance to digest everything and write it
13 all down.

14 But what I have to add here is
15 pertaining to the fact that you are talking
16 about phasing it in over or putting it in
17 place for 18 months rather than 12. Now,
18 obviously you are doing that to reduce the
19 amount that is -- will be cost at the given
20 time -- at this -- at any given time.

21 However, if you are riding Metro
22 consistently you are paying that amount over

1 the full 18 months. So you are paying the
2 full fare increase no matter what. If you
3 ride more than average, then you are paying
4 that over that longer period of time, or if
5 you are riding -- and so you are paying more
6 than you would if it had been over the 12
7 months.

8 And our occasional riders and our
9 visitors, who don't ride it all the time will
10 get the full benefit of that decreased fare
11 increase over that whole period of time, and
12 they will be paying less.

13 So I think that the whole idea of
14 doing it over the 18-month period rather than
15 the 12 is kind of --it's an accounting trick,
16 but it actually doesn't decrease it for
17 anybody except for those who don't really use
18 the system a lot.

19 And so I think you really need to
20 take that particular part of the -- this in
21 to consideration. And as I said, the other
22 issues I have I will address in writing

1 later, they've been addressed already, so.

2 MR. LINTON: Thank you. I think
3 Jeffery was our last registered person to
4 testify before us this evening. Let me once
5 again thank all of you for your testimony,
6 for coming out -- taking your time to bring
7 these issues in front of this board and all
8 of our staff who are here this evening.

9 Obviously, as Mr. Benjamin stated
10 earlier, raising fares is a difficult --
11 difficult part of what we are required to do,
12 primarily because we are required to have a
13 balanced budget so that we can continue to
14 operate our system. And we don't have a lot
15 of choices.

16 And I've been on all sides of this
17 issue, throughout my career, and coming to
18 public hearings and hearing our public talk
19 about the pains and difficulties of these
20 fare increase has on their daily lives is
21 something that is difficult for us to sit
22 here and hear.

1 But we still have to make sure that
2 the buses are running. The services are
3 operating on a daily basis. We are going to
4 have to go back look at the testimony that
5 you provided, but also the testimony that's
6 being provided in all the other hearings
7 around the region, and see how we can best
8 put forth a fare proposal that will keep the
9 system running and try to find as much
10 balance as much equity as we can get.

11 Unfortunately, this is also a
12 political environment. And even though some
13 of us may very much share your views in terms
14 of what we would like to have in terms of
15 this region, we also have to get the balance
16 support among the region to move a fare
17 increase forward.

18 And if we don't have a fare
19 increase then the required action that we
20 must take in order to have a balanced budget
21 will mean to reduce service. And I know we
22 had a lot of testimony tonight about the

1 poorness of the service, but we would have to
2 go and resort to reducing service and having
3 more severe cuts. That's something we don't
4 want to do as well.

5 And as I indicated earlier we still
6 have put forth an increase in subsidies from
7 the jurisdictions and we have yet to hear
8 back from the jurisdictions their agreement
9 to do that. We are hopeful that those
10 increases that we have asked the
11 jurisdictions to provide will also be
12 forthcoming.

13 So the challenges are difficult and
14 hopefully we will move forward with the
15 proposal that is balanced, that we can get
16 reasonable equity, that we can get support
17 for, and that we can provide continued
18 service.

19 I will add one point tonight there
20 is an issue coming before the Board that
21 deals with a fare policy. Many of the items
22 that you mentioned tonight over the next

1 several months, we were hopefully dealing
2 with, and how we deal with a failed policy
3 that is equitable. And I would add that also
4 would tie to some service standards that we
5 need to provide as well.

6 But as one of the gentlemen
7 mentioned earlier, service is very often
8 related to resources. More vehicles, more
9 changes in our subsystems, increase in our
10 railcars, all those are things that require
11 additional dollars, and we are hopeful that
12 some of the capital money is coming out of
13 Maryland and other places will provide that.

14 That will allow us to reduce some
15 of the headways on the Red Line that have
16 more reliable service, so that many of the
17 complaints that you made tonight we can make
18 some inroads in. We recognize this has been
19 a struggle; we are hopeful that we can make
20 some improvements in that as well.

21 Yes, we understand that service is
22 tied to fares. But the hearing tonight was

1 about fares itself, and we needed your
2 testimony, so that we hopefully can get some
3 reasonable equity in this fare proposal when
4 it is finally approved by this board.

5 Thank you for coming again, for my
6 colleagues, who are here, and for the staff,
7 who is here, we appreciate each and every one
8 of you for taking your time to come before us
9 this evening.

10 The hearing is now adjourned.

11 (Whereupon, at 12:52 p.m., the
12 PROCEEDINGS were adjourned.)

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