



January 2021

Dear Chairman Smedberg and Members of the Board:

We were pleased by the recent passage of additional federal support for transit agencies and are grateful that WMATA will be able to use this new source of operating funds to maintain current rail service levels and provide for a phased expansion of bus operations over the coming months. The extension of some routes to fill in the gaps of currently dormant routes is also highly laudable.

As concerns the public hearings for the FY22 budget, the RAC wishes to emphasize the need for WMATA staff to make it clear that additional federal support would avert the 'fiscal cliff' in the second half of FY22. We noted in our December report that popular perceptions of the original FY22 budget proposal caused widespread dismay amongst general riders. WMATA must emphasize that the cuts will only occur if there is no additional federal relief and that they would begin in January. Clear timelines and graphics are key. Riders are trying to navigate a profoundly uncertain period and WMATA must do whatever it can to avoid adding to their stress.

Finally, we want to congratulate WMATA for receiving an FTA grant to test new technologies for transit vehicle ventilation.¹ As noted in the RAC's October 2020 report, we are heartened by the work done on this front at Portland's Tri-Met and San Francisco's BART last Summer and Autumn and we are grateful to see WMATA following their lead.²

Very sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Andrew Kierig", followed by a stylized flourish.

Andrew Kierig
Chair

¹ "Metro launches pilot program to test new air filtration system in subway cars." *Washington Post* 2021-01-20. <https://ttm.sh/dl0>

² RAC October 2020 Report. <https://ttm.sh/2dr.pdf>