

**Testimony of Catherine Hudgins, First Vice-Chair, Virginia
Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority Board of Directors
Commonwealth Transportation Board Public Hearing
FY 2011-2016 Six-Year Improvement Program
May 26, 2010**

On behalf of the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (Metro), I would like to thank the Commonwealth of Virginia for its dedication to funding and supporting transit in Northern Virginia and the National Capital Region. We are especially appreciative of the Commonwealth's commitment to provide \$50 million in dedicated funding for Metro beginning in Fiscal Year 2011. The allocation of these matching funds, in conjunction with similar amounts from the District of Columbia and Maryland, allows Metro to match \$150 million in federal funds, thereby creating \$300 million in additional funding for Metro to address our most critical needs: safety, reliability and financial stability.

Why is this funding so important to Metro? Not considering the cost of financing, we have determined that our capital needs over the next 10 years exceed \$11 billion, not including any system expansion. Over \$7 million is required just to maintain Metro's aging bus and rail systems in a state of good repair. Many of those needs are safety-critical.

We have a 34-year old rail system. It has old rail cars, track bed, power equipment, and communications systems. More than half of our bus garages are over 50 years old and

some buses are 15 years old. As the equipment and facilities age, they become less reliable, break down more often, and need more maintenance. We have to replace our tracks, trains, and buses, and must rehabilitate our stations, bridges, and maintenance facilities. We have 30-year-old ventilation, lighting, and communications systems which must be maintained or replaced. Some of our station platforms are crumbling, our escalators and elevators need major repairs, and water is leaking into our tunnels. We must do all of the work required while providing service to 1.3 million customers daily on Metrorail and Metrobus.

We have been fortunate that the Commonwealth and our other funding partners have demonstrated such strong support for Metro's capital program. As a result, Metro has been able to build out a 106-mile rail system, operate a fleet of 1500 buses, and provide paratransit service to thousands of customers. We have also been able to make a number of critical investments in the system, including, for the first time, running 8-car trains.

Metro also makes numerous contributions to citizens' quality of life and the environment. Every year, the Metro system saves the region 75 million gallons of gasoline and reduces congestion, saving area residents approximately 60 hours in travel time per year. Metrorail takes 500,000 cars off the road each weekday and eliminates the need for 1,400 miles of highway lanes.

Metro also contributes to the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions. If Metrorail and Metrobus passengers chose to drive, they would generate one million tons of carbon dioxide a year. The entire 1,500 Metrobus fleet is eco-friendly, with a combination of CNG, advanced technology diesel and hybrid-electric buses, plus ultra low sulfur diesel fuel and exhaust treatment devices to lower emissions.

In addition to environmental and quality of life benefits, Metro stimulates regional economic development and is a linchpin in the region's \$359 billion economy. There are more than 40 Metro-related joint development projects under development or completed. To date, the value of development at or within a quarter-mile of Metrorail stations exceeds \$25 billion. Metro is crucial to the economic vitality and sustainability of Northern Virginia and the National Capital Region.

Going forward, it is crucial that Metro and the region make the necessary investments to keep the system in a state of good repair. The Commonwealth's contribution of \$50 million annually will allow us to secure and match federal funds and continue making urgently needed investments in the aging infrastructure of our system so that we can continue to provide millions of people with safe and reliable service. The Commonwealth's commitment to programming this \$50 million local match in its six-year transportation program is essential in keeping our system safe and in a state of good repair.

Again, thank you for your commitment to Metro and to transit in Northern Virginia.