



300 7th Street SW
Washington, DC 20024
(202) 962-2511

January 17, 2024

Delegate Luke Torian, Chair
House Appropriations Committee
General Assembly Building, Room 1223
201 North 9th Street
Richmond, Virginia 23219

via email

Dear Del. Torian:

The Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) Riders' Advisory Council (RAC) serves in an advisory role to the WMATA Board of Directors and represents the diverse concerns of nearly 400,000 daily riders who use the Metro system (bus, rail and paratransit). Riders come from all backgrounds, including federal workers, military personnel, families, students, people working multiple jobs, and airport employees. Metro (both bus and rail) is a lifeline to many riders to get to work, school, the doctor's office, the grocery store, and other important community services. To state that riders are concerned about the short and long-term health of the Metro system is an understatement.

In 2018, the Virginia General Assembly imposed a 3 percent cap on growth on Virginia's annual operating subsidy to WMATA. Although the subsidy cap might have made sense in 2018, it could prove devastating to riders in 2024 and beyond. According to WMATA, riders face up to 60 percent service cuts. For Virginia rail riders, this means the likely prospect of 20 to 30 minute wait times at various stations. We fear it means less Transit Police officers and more safety concerns. Quite simply, riders are deeply concerned that service cuts will result in drastically decreased ridership and potentially herald the end of Metro as we know it.

The RAC's 2023 Annual Report identified the long-term health of the Metro system and consistency of operations as top concerns among riders. Sixty percent of riders who contributed to the report specifically expressed concern that the system will gradually cease being a viable source of regional public transportation. Without timely action from the Virginia General Assembly, those concerns will prove prescient. Riders are likely to abandon the system in droves and the entire Northern Virginia region will feel the collateral effects.

Budget issues are full of metrics, numbers and quantifiable data points. But for riders, the Metro budget issue is personal. The RAC continues to collect personal stories from riders detailing how the potential service cuts will affect them. Many lives will be upended. Families risk additional expenses over child care. Longer commutes will decrease workplace production or missed medical appointments. Riders flatly reported to the RAC that they will indeed abandon the system if service is drastically decreased. Please view an online sampling of comments from

RAC members and others from across the transit zone expressing what a drastic cut in service means to them: [Riders Express Concerns about Proposed Drastic Metro Service Cuts](#)

As noted, Metro (both bus and rail) is not just a vital, transcendent part of our community and a lifeline for more than 400,000 daily riders. Each number represents a real person in the community with diverse needs. Timely action by the Virginia General Assembly is needed to preserve safe, reliable mass transit now and for years to come. The RAC stands ready to assist you in ensuring that riders and their fundamental needs are represented.

Sincerely,

Mike Lebowitz

Michael J. Lebowitz (Virginia)
Chair, WMATA Riders' Advisory Council

Cole Staudt, Vice Chair (District of Columbia)
Majalya Fernando, Vice Chair (Maryland)
Solomon Chen (Virginia)
Leonard Edwards (District of Columbia)
Lucas Habosky (District of Columbia)
Brian Meyer (Virginia)
Dina Passman (District of Columbia)
Patrick Sheehan, Accessibility Advisory Committee Representative (Maryland)
Brandon Wu (District of Columbia)

cc: Members, House Appropriations Committee



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January 17, 2024

Del. Paul E. Krizek, Chair
House Appropriations Sub-Committee:
Transportation & Public Safety
General Assembly Building, Room 1010
201 North 9th Street
Richmond, Virginia 23219

via email

Dear Delegate Krizek:

The Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) Riders' Advisory Council (RAC) serves in an advisory role to the WMATA Board of Directors and represents the diverse concerns of nearly 400,000 daily riders who use the Metro system (bus, rail and paratransit). Riders come from all backgrounds, including federal workers, military personnel, families, students, people working multiple jobs, and airport employees. Metro (both bus and rail) is a lifeline to many riders to get to work, school, the doctor's office, the grocery store, and other important community services. To state that riders are concerned about the short and long-term health of the Metro system is an understatement.

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cc: Members, House Transportation & Public Safety Subcommittee



300 7th Street SW
Washington, DC 20024
(202) 962-2511

January 17, 2024

Sen. L. Louise Lucas, Chair
Senate Finance and Appropriations Committee
General Assembly Building, Room 1404
201 North 9th Street
Richmond, Virginia 23219

via email

Dear Senator Lucas:

The Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) Riders' Advisory Council (RAC) serves in an advisory role to the WMATA Board of Directors and represents the diverse concerns of nearly 400,000 daily riders who use the Metro system (bus, rail and paratransit). Riders come from all backgrounds, including federal workers, military personnel, families, students, people working multiple jobs, and airport employees. Metro (both bus and rail) is a lifeline to many riders to get to work, school, the doctor's office, the grocery store, and other important community services. To state that riders are concerned about the short and long-term health of the Metro system is an understatement.

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cc: Members, Senate Finance and Appropriations Committee



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Washington, DC 20024
(202) 962-2511

January 17, 2024

Sen. Jeremy S. McPike, Chair
Senate Finance and Appropriations Sub-Committee:
Capital Outlay Transportation
General Assembly Building, Room 607
201 North 9th Street
Richmond, Virginia 23219

via email

Dear Senator McPike:

The Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) Riders' Advisory Council (RAC) serves in an advisory role to the WMATA Board of Directors and represents the diverse concerns of nearly 400,000 daily riders who use the Metro system (bus, rail and paratransit). Riders come from all backgrounds, including federal workers, military personnel, families, students, people working multiple jobs, and airport employees. Metro (both bus and rail) is a lifeline to many riders to get to work, school, the doctor's office, the grocery store, and other important community services. To state that riders are concerned about the short and long-term health of the Metro system is an understatement.

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cc: Members, Senate Capital Outlay & Transportation Subcommittee