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September X, 2009

Acting Administrator Paul F. Prouty
Government Services Administration
Office of the Administrator
1800 F Street, NW, Washington-, DC 20405

Dear Acting Administrator Prouty,

On August 19, 2009, President Obama signed amendments to the Compact of the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) that create four new seats on the Board of ~~the~~ WMATA, selected by the Administrator of the General Services Administration, as authorized in P.L. 110-432. ~~We hope that as~~As you approach this benchmark decision in the history of WMATA and its relationship to the federal government, we ask that you please consider the interests of the riding public. WMATA provides basic transportation to residents of the National Capital Region. It is central to how many residents of the region live, work and play. It takes people of all income levels and backgrounds to and from work at all hours of the day and night, to religious services, medical appointments, day care and cultural events. For some transit dependent individuals, such as the elderly, individuals with disabilities, limited English proficient individuals, low income and very low income individuals, transit can be a lifeline to participation in society, providing them their only means of navigating their communities. It brings people home safely in all weather conditions, when they are alone, and when cars break down. It takes people home when they are ~~too~~tired or ~~too~~ drunk to driveintoxicated, protecting not only the rider, but people they may never meet.

As Federal Board members ~~with no direct tie to any one of the three member jurisdictions~~, these new members will be in a position to represent the interests of all WMATA ~~users~~riders. We hope that, ~~in accepting this responsibility~~, these members will be committed to their role in working with our existing Board members in governing the nation's second busiest transit authority, a transit system that serves over one millions of riders every day, display diligence and care in conducting this responsibility, and proceed in a way that is both transparent and accountable to the public. We also hope they will

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have confidence in the staff of the Authority in maintaining their position of governance, oversight, and public service.

A Commitment to WMATA and the National Capital Region

Our current Board members bring many strengths to their roles. Many are duly elected officials in their home jurisdictions with direct links to the individuals, communities, employers and private businesses and public service agencies in our area that rely on WMATA to access basic services and jobs, conduct business, and deliver critical social services. Other Board members are appointed based on their professional and personal experience ~~and personal traits~~ that add to the capacity of the Board to address the issues faced by WMATA and its riders.

We realize this is a position that comes with no compensation provided by WMATA. It is a substantial commitment and we hope that federal appointees appreciate the time and effort our current Board members devote to this responsibility and will be in a position to fully participate in Board activity.

Membership

Among the personal experiences of Federal Board members, we would suggest a strong preference for individuals with extensive experience using transit. Specifically, we request that all Federal Board ~~Members~~ members are experienced transit riders; at least two members, including one voting member, are current, regular WMATA riders, using WMATA services as their primary method of transportation for all purposes; at least two members, including one voting member, have a demonstrated commitment to the National Capitol Region through their years of residence, or other community service to the area.

As you approach these appointments, we request that you designate specific individuals to these positions whose personal and professional experiences will help guide the Authority. While ~~the statute P.L. 110-432 and the Compact Amendments~~ provided little ~~some~~ specific ~~criteria~~ guidance on selecting officials, ~~your own agency~~ GSA's guidance on appointing members to Federal Advisory Committee's states lists the following factors to consider in determining membership for GSA appointed bodies: (i) The ~~advisory committee's~~ mission; (ii) The geographic, ethnic, social, economic, or scientific impact of the ~~advisory committee's~~ group's recommendations; (iii) The types of specific perspectives required, for example, such as those of consumers, technical experts, the public at-large, academia, business, or other sectors; (iv) The need to obtain divergent points of view on the issues before the ~~advisory committee~~ group; and (v) The relevance of State, local, or tribal governments to the development of the ~~advisory committee~~ group's recommendations.

The WMATA Board provides guidance to the Authority on many internal and external issues. We ask that you consider a broad range of candidates with experience in human services, economic and community development, land use planning, infrastructure development, labor and employee management, financial management, oversight, and

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safety, when appointing the Federal members. To ~~this end, to~~ take full advantage of the diversity and experience of ~~the federal government~~the potential pool of Federal candidates, to the extent that appointees are current federal officials, we would suggest appointing no more than one official from any one Cabinet Department or Independent Agency.

Oversight and Accountability

In addition to appointing members, decisions will ~~also~~ need to be made in the Executive Branch regarding to whom the Federal members will report ~~to~~. ~~In addition, i~~Information about the Federal Board members will need to be available to the riding public as well. We would suggest establishing and maintaining a website that includes the names, titles and biographies of Federal Board members, contact information, and documentation of Board ~~Member-member~~ activities. This website should be fully readable by accessibility software and strong consideration should be given to creating translations of documents and the website into foreign languages commonly spoken in the WMATA service area.

In addition, written annual reports with quarterly updates should be made available to the riding public via the website and hard copies on file at WMATA headquarters and at least two metro accessible public libraries in each of the three member jurisdictions. We would ask that A~~all~~ materials should be in a format that is fully accessible to individuals with disabilities, and any translated versions should also be provided. In addition, we would suggest forwarding written quarterly and annual reports to the Legislative Branch as well, including the Appropriations, Authorizing and Oversight ~~-~~Committees of both Chambers of Congress, ~~the Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee, House Oversight and Government Reform Committee, Senate Banking Committee, and House Transportation & Infrastructure Committee,~~ as well as to the personal offices of Senate and House Members representing the WMATA service area.

In closing, we would add that we view this new phase in the history of WMATA as an opportunity not only for WMATA to benefit from the experience and perspective of federal officials, but for the federal government to benefit from direct and continuous participation in the activity of a local government entity that directly serves the public. We believe this experience ~~will could~~ promote a greater understanding of the challenges faced by local government and how the federal government can partner with state and local government to protect the interest of the public. We look forward to welcoming our new Board members and working with them on issues of interest to our riders.

Additional information about our Council can be found on our web page at http://www.wmata.com/about_metro/riders_advisory_council/. If you or your staff have an interest in discussing issues affecting the WMATA riders, our Council may be contacted through our staff person, John Pasek at 202 962 2891. In addition, please extend an invitation to our new Federal Board members once they are appointed to meet with us or attend any R.A.C. meetings, regularly scheduled the first Wednesday of every month from 6:30-8:30p at WMATA headquarters.

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Sincerely,

[Names]

cc:

[U.S Senate Committee on Appropriations, Subcommittee on Financial Services and General Government](#)

[U.S. Senate Committee Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, Subcommittee on Oversight of Government Management, the Federal Workforce and District of Columbia](#)

[U.S. Senate Committee on Banking, Housing and Community Development, Subcommittee on Housing Transportation and Community Development](#)

[U.S House Committee on Appropriations, Subcommittee on Financial Services and General Government](#)

[U.S. House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, Subcommittee on the Federal Workforce, Postal Service and District of Columbia](#)

[U.S. House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, Subcommittee on Highways and Transit](#)

[Senator Barbara Mikulski](#)

[Senator Ben Cardin](#)

[Senator James Webb](#)

[Senator Mark Warner](#)

[Representative Elijah Cummings](#)

[Representative Eleanor Holmes Norton](#)

[Representative James Moran](#)

[Representative Chris Van Hollen](#)

[Representative Donna Edwards](#)

[Representative Gerald Connolly](#)

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