

RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF A GUARANTEED REGIONAL FUNDING PROGRAM

FOR THE

WASHINGTON METROPOLITAN AREA TRANSIT AUTHORITY

OFFERED BY THE SULLY DISTRICT COUNCIL OF CIVIL ASSOCIATIONS

MARCH 2017

Since its creation by an interstate compact in 1967, the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) has been engaged in the planning, design, construction, financing and operation of a regional public transportation system in the national capital area. In the 50 years of its existence, WMATA has created a regional fixed rail transit system (Metrorail) which today includes 91 stations and 117 miles of track, and operates a companion fixed route bus system (Metrobus) with approximately 1,500 buses.

In terms of average daily ridership, the WMATA system ranks as the fourth largest urban public transportation system in the United States, trailing only the systems serving the New York City, Chicago, and Los Angeles metropolitan areas. With nearly one million combined Metrorail and Metrobus passengers being transported on a typical weekday, the WMATA system is a critically important element of the multimodal transportation system serving the Washington metropolitan region. Yet despite its importance to the basic personal mobility and economic health of the region, the WMATA system lacks a dedicated and reliable source of funding. This is in contrast to the dedicated funding mechanisms which are available to support the nation's other major public transportation systems.

It is estimated that the total cost for the construction of the existing WMATA Metrorail system is on the order of \$15 billion. These capital funds have been obtained from the federal, state, and local jurisdictions who are members of the interstate compact. The estimated annual cost for the operations and maintenance of this massive regional bus and rail system is on the order of \$3 billion per year. While a substantial portion of the annual operating costs of the system, on the order of 50 percent, are being generated by passenger revenues, this still leaves approximately \$1.5 billion each year to be contributed by the compact signatories in order to meet essential operating costs. Yet over the past two decades, the annual funding levels typically provided by the state and local jurisdictions through their respective annual budgeting processes have regularly and consistently failed to fully cover the WMATA system's basic operations and maintenance costs.

As a result of this continuing failure to meet the basic costs of WMATA system operations, the quality of the bus and rail service provided has declined, the physical condition of the infrastructure and vehicle fleet has deteriorated, and the level of passenger safety has fallen. This continuing underfunding of the system's clearly identified capital rehabilitation and operating cost needs has contributed to lower ridership and reduced passenger revenues which in turn have resulted in increasing annual operating deficits. This situation cannot be allowed to continue.

In recognition of the need to take definitive action to address this issue, the members of the Sully District Council of Civic Associations thus call upon our elected representatives at the federal, state, and

local levels to cooperate fully and effectively with their counterparts in the District of Columbia, Maryland, and Virginia in seeking the creation of a dedicated, long term source of revenue at the regional level sufficient to adequately fund the annual capital, operating, and maintenance costs of the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority. The absence of such a dedicated revenue source has existed for far too long. It is well past time for the appropriate funding for “America’s Subway” to be identified and committed to this important regional transportation asset.

Resolution adopted this ____ day of _____, 2017 by the Land Use and Transportation Committee of the Sully District Council of Civic Associations.

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