



GREATER WASHINGTON PARTNERSHIP

FROM BALTIMORE TO RICHMOND.
FOSTERING UNITY. ADVANCING GROWTH.

Senate Bill 279
Metro Board Member Act
Senate Finance Committee
February 7, 2018

Position: Support

Chairman Middleton and Members of the Finance Committee—

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. The Greater Washington Partnership (“Partnership”) is a first-of-its-kind civic alliance of the Capital Region’s leading CEOs stretching from Baltimore to Richmond – drawing from the leading employers and entrepreneurs – that together employ more than 175,000 people. The Partnership is a founding member of the MetroNow Coalition that represents a diverse group of regional leaders from organizations representing businesses and non-profit advocates who have come together to ensure that action is taken to put Metro – a vital component of Maryland’s transportation infrastructure – on a safe, smart and sustainable path forward in 2018 and beyond. We are dedicated to securing comprehensive improvement of Metro’s governance, funding and operational structures in Maryland, Virginia and the District of Columbia in 2018.

I speak today as a representative of the Greater Washington Partnership and the MetroNow Coalition in support of SB279 that would require the Secretary of Maryland’s Department of Transportation (MDOT) be an appointee to WMATA’s Board of Directors. This is a step in the right direction for Maryland, as it requires direct accountability and leadership by MDOT for WMATA’s decisions. More than 400,000 Marylanders rely on WMATA daily to complete their trips and access destinations. As the the primary funder of WMATA for the State of Maryland, MDOT should be an active leader on WMATA’s Board to ensure residents receive safe, efficient, and reliability service.

To guarantee WMATA can get beyond just ‘Back2Good’, but to a world-class system that drives our region’s economy, we support additional reforms to WMATA’s governance funding structures.

Additional reforms to the WMATA’s Board are needed to ensure our investments are driven by performance and not politics. We believe these changes can be made without amending the WMATA compact. Specifically, the MetroNow Coalition is working in a coordinated fashion in Maryland, Virginia and the District of Columbia to:

- reduce the size of the Board of Directors;
- remove compact signatories’ veto authority;
- ensure Board members have qualifications in relevant fields;
- provide equitable compensation for each Board of Director;
- enhance transparency and oversight, and;
- improve stakeholder input.

This is why we support Senator Feldman’s amendment to SB279.

Reforming WMATA's governance structure can only get us so far. WMATA is the second busiest transit system in the country, and the only major system without a dedicated funding source. Much of the system has reached its useful life, and needs reinvestment to ensure safe, reliable, and efficient service for the region's traveling public. To achieve this effort, we support amending the Maryland Metro Funding Act (SB277) to increase Maryland's investment to \$167 million annually in dedicated, bondable funding. Together, with Virginia and the District of Columbia adhering to the current WMATA funding methodology, our region can provide Metro an additional \$500 million per year in dedicated funding to reverse the transit system's decline.

We urge your support this year to reform WMATA's governance and funding structures. Our workforce, our economy, and our quality of life cannot afford to kick the can down the road another year.

Sincerely,

Joe McAndrew
Transportation Policy Director
Greater Washington Partnership