



Testimony in Support of SB 136

Senate Budget & Taxation Committee, February 5, 2020

The Maryland Transit Opportunities Coalition, a state-wide coalition of transit riders, transit advocates, and transit workers, supports Senate Bill 136.

In today's economy, transit is the key to economic prosperity. This can be seen in the construction cranes that surround Metro stations in Montgomery and Prince George's Counties. It can be seen in the ambitious plans to redevelop the Penn Station area in Baltimore and in city residents' demands for better bus access to jobs. It can be seen in the demand for light rail in Southern Maryland and for more MARC train service in far-flung areas of the state.

For the last hundred years Maryland and the United States have pursued an automobile-first transportation policy. The result is a severely imbalanced transport network that hobbles our economy and degrades the quality of life by leaving too many Marylanders with little choice but to drive on congested highways. Our economic future rests on our ability to free our citizens from this burden.

The artificial 3% cap on the state's contribution to WMATA operations is a severe obstacle to the needed rebalancing of our transportation system. In the current budget cycle, it is forcing cuts in Metrobus service when that service needs to expand. We urge you to give Senate Bill 136 a favorable report.