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The Honorable Kumar Barve and
Members of the Environment & Transportation Committee

REPRESENTATIVES

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Local 430
TIMOTHY HUMMELBAUGH

Local 600
JASON WEAVER

BRUNSWICK
Local 631
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EDMONSTON
Local 1470
KENZELL CRAWFORD

BALTIMORE
Local 610
JOHNNY WALKER

Local 1949
CORA WEEMS

RE: SUPPORT HB-1236

As State Legislative Director for the Transportation Division of the International Association of Sheet Metal, Air, Rail and Transportation Worker's I am urging your committee to **support HB1236**, " *Transit - Maryland Area Regional Commuter Train - Expansion of Service.*"

Our organization represents railroad workers who are employed by CSX Transportation, Norfolk Southern Railroad, Canton Railroad and also work as Conductors and Assistant Conductors in MARC and Amtrak commuter services.

HB-1236 provides a path to greatly expand the utility of MARC service by providing a one-seat MARC ticket for Marylanders to connect to L'Enfant in the District of Columbia and on to Northern Virginia.

Our union has long championed commuter rail investment. We know from data that improving and expanding commuter rail pays big dividends – it boosts jobs and housing, generates increased tax revenues, spurs new businesses, and reduces our addiction to single occupancy vehicles thus improving our congestion and pollution.

MARC is critical to the State of Maryland:

- It provides 35,000 trips every day delivering essential transportation options to the people of this state.
- It is critical to Maryland's economic growth and supports good middle-class jobs including the operating employees who are members of SMART-TD.
- Improved and expanded MARC service will lead to increased job creation as new businesses locate here to take advantage of superior transportation options for employees and customers.
- During a time of suffocating traffic on our roads, MARC gives the people of this state and region a chance to travel to jobs and other important destinations without the time and financial losses associated with severe gridlock.

HB-1236 gives us a chance to pursue an important transition – a transition to a commuter rail system that is more seamless and better connects us to jobs and opportunity throughout our greater super-region. Every day, hundreds of thousands of Marylanders wake up in one jurisdiction but work in another, with many crossing our state’s border. This bill addresses the natural travel patterns of our residents by looking to pilot service beyond Union Station where MARC’s Brunswick, Camden and Penn lines all terminate today and extend to L’Enfant, Crystal City and Alexandria in the coming years.

The reality is that MARC service today is based on a dated vision: to get Marylanders in and out of the District of Columbia. The commuting patterns are different today and we should have a commuter rail system that makes transportation between Maryland, the District of Columbia and Virginia easier, more frequent and accessible.

HB-1236 prepares us for a transition to run-through service as the region constructs the new Long Bridge over the Potomac River, which will remove a severe rail infrastructure chokepoint. In the interim, MARC can collaborate with partners to allow up to two round-trip, single seat trains from Maryland into Virginia well before Long Bridge construction is completed later this decade.

HB-1236 will launch a process that, if successful, will prepare MARC to offer more and better service as infrastructure and service offerings catch up with demand. The bill will bring key voices to the table to determine the most effective way to run the through service pilot.

The bill will also eventually fuel commuter rail job creation as more skilled railroad employees will be needed as service improves, expands and better integrates Maryland with Virginia.

My members are committed to seeing this through – it is an important necessary step we must take if we’re serious about elevating both the type and quality of service provided by MARC.

We strongly urge your committee to give a favorable report to HB-1236.

Sincerely



Lawrence E. Kasecamp

MD State Legislative Director

 Transportation Division