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THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

**HB 1236, Transit - Maryland Area Regional Commuter Train - Expansion of Service
March 5, 2020**

Chairman Barve, Vice Chair Stein, Committee Members,

Thank you for the opportunity to present today on my legislation HB 1236, which would require the Maryland Transit Administration (MTA) to engage in good faith negotiations with DC, VA, the appropriate federal agencies, and railroad companies to reach a written agreement on a pilot program to establish MARC train service between Union Station, L'Enfant Station, Crystal City Station, and Alexandria Station. The pilot will include two round trips per day - two morning trains to Alexandria and two evening trains back to the District of Columbia and Maryland.

MARC Service is Critical to Connecting Our Region – From Baltimore to Richmond

- While we have more robust rail services than other regions in the nation, we fall far short of global peers in London, Paris, Berlin, and Madrid who have all created interconnected rail networks.
- The *Greater Washington Partnership (GWP)*, a civic alliance of the Capital Region's leading CEO's from Baltimore to Richmond, has prioritized enhanced MARC service and identified it as a key action in their blueprint for regional growth.
- Through improvements to the system, GWP estimates you could potentially triple the ridership to as many as 90,000 daily users.

Commuter Rail Improvements Could Spur Economic Growth

- Increased service could provide economic opportunities for all Marylanders from Frederick to Montgomery and Harford to Prince Georges.
- The GWP's "Regional Blueprint," which advocates for this improvement, is driven by CEO's from some of the biggest companies in the area including Under Armour, T-Rowe Price, Capital One, MedStar Health, and more, who are focused on growing our region.
- Dr. Freeman Hrabowski, the President of the University of Maryland Baltimore County (UMBC) said:

"As we see large numbers of technology and other jobs created in the Baltimore-Washington, D.C.-Northern Virginia corridor, it is imperative that Maryland keeps pace by ensuring that we have a more effective transportation infrastructure, including daily public transportation alternatives between Maryland and Northern Virginia. With such companies as Amazon creating jobs in Northern Virginia, UMBC graduates who want to continue to live in Maryland while working in Northern Virginia may be forced to leave

the state if adequate transit options are not available. The MARC train is an important option for many UMBC students, faculty, staff, and alumni... ”

- Chambers of Commerce and bipartisan colleagues from across the state agree that a robust and expanded rail system must be part of our region’s economic future.

This service fits perfectly within MTA’s Long Term Plan, which describes the MARC System in such a way:

- Strengthens economic and social ties between Baltimore and Washington
- Serves BRAC-related travel markets
- Offers mobility choice for commuters and regional travelers
- Encourages efficient regional land use development and transit-oriented development
- Provides fast, reliable transportation in key corridors
- Efficient and environmentally sustainable (air, water, energy) transportation investment
- Reduces need to expand highways in areas with limited/expensive construction opportunities
- Provides backbone for integrated Baltimore region transit system

Unfortunately Since reaching a peak in 2014, investments and ridership in MARC have declined. Enhancing MARC will strengthen the economy from Baltimore to Richmond, offer mobility choice for commuters and regional travelers, encourage efficient regional land use and transit-oriented development, support efficient and environmentally sustainable transportation, and provide the backbone for an integrated MD, VA, and DC regional transit system. This bill enjoys the strong support of:

2030 Group

American Train Dispatchers Association (ATDA)

Brotherhood of Railroad Signalmen (BRS)

Gaithersburg-Germantown Chamber of Commerce

Greater Washington Partnership

International Association of Machinists & Aerospace Workers (IAMAW)

International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW)

JBG SMITH

Montgomery County Chamber of Commerce

National Conference of Firemen & Oilers, SEIU (NCFO-SEIU)

Prince George’s Chamber of Commerce

Sheet, Metal, Air, Rail, and Transportation Workers Mechanical Division (SMART- MD)

Sheet, Metal, Air, Rail, and Transportation Workers Transportation Division (SMART- TD)

Transport Workers Union of America (TWU)

Transportation Communications Union (TCU)

Almost everyone on the committee has a MARC station in or near their districts. I want you to think about what an expansion of those lines and access to jobs would mean to your districts? How much time could your constituents save from traffic? How would this make your area more economically competitive?

In order to make these dreams a reality, we first need a plan. That’s simply what this bill asks for – for the stakeholders to begin developing a plan for run-through service.

I urge a favorable report and thank you for your consideration.