

March 5, 2020

The Honorable Kumar P. Barve, Chair  
Members of the Environment & Transportation Committee  
Room 251  
House Office Building  
Annapolis, Maryland

**Re: Request a Favorable Report for HB 1236**

Chairman Barve and Members of the Environment & Transportation Committee—

The Greater Washington Partnership (“Partnership”) is a civic alliance of the Capital Region’s leading employers and entrepreneurs stretching from Baltimore to Richmond that together employ more than 200,000 residents. Our transportation system is a priority for the Partnership and is essential to ensuring the Capital Region is one of the best places to live, work and build a business.

Every morning, nearly 50 percent of residents wake up in one jurisdiction and work in another and 20 percent cross a state border. Yet MARC is unable to meet this demand because its system is designed around an objective that is dated: to largely get people in and out of the District of Columbia during peak periods. The existing network stops all trains in the District at Union Station—preventing MARC trains from traveling throughout the region, and in turn reducing connectivity. This leaves many thriving business and job centers without bi-directional service—and leaves many trains at capacity during peak-hour travel, leaving little room for growth. This situation has diminished service to the region’s riders.

For years, through two MARC Growth & Investment Plans and a new MARC Cornerstone Plan, MDOT has planned to modernize and expand the reliability and frequency of MARC service. However, progress has been limited. This is why the Greater Washington Partnership supports HB 1236 that will direct MDOT to study and enter into good faith negotiations with relevant regional partners to pilot service beyond Union Station in the District to L’Enfant Station, Crystal City Station and Alexandria Station, which is a key recommendation in the Partnership’s [Blueprint for Regional Mobility](#).

HB 1236 would enhance the utility of MARC service for existing riders throughout the state, bring thousands more residents closer to upward economic mobility, and open residential and commercial development opportunities for many MARC station communities.

An enhanced partnership between the General Assembly and MDOT will ensure HB 1236 is the first of many improvements to MARC service including: closing the MARC-SEPTA commuter rail gap, expanding MARC service in Western Maryland, establishing a Penn-Camden MARC connection in Baltimore, replacing the Civil War era B&P tunnel and with it opening the



opportunity to triple ridership on the Penn Line and open unparalleled economic development opportunities from Baltimore to the District of Columbia, and connecting thousands of jobs and patients at the Johns Hopkins Bayview Medical Center with MARC service.

The Greater Washington Partnership applauds Delegate Solomon and the General Assembly for your commitment to improving transportation connections throughout the Capital Region and we urge the Environment & Transportation Committee to take action to maximize MARC's potential by issuing a **favorable report on HB 1236**.

Sincerely,

Joe McAndrew  
Director for Transportation Policy  
Greater Washington Partnership

