



**Senate Bill 126 -- *Transportation - WMATA Operating Assistance - Alteration*
(*Maryland Metro Funding Act of 2024*)
Senate Budget and Taxation Committee
January 24, 2024
Support**

The Montgomery County Chamber of Commerce (MCCC), the voice of business in Metro Maryland, supports Senate Bill 126 -- *Transportation - WMATA Operating Assistance - Alteration (Maryland Metro Funding Act of 2024)*.

For Fiscal Year 2025, Senate Bill 126 allows for a pause in the requirement that the Secretary of Transportation withhold a portion of the State's annual operating grant to the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) when WMATA's budget increases by more than 3% over the previous fiscal year.

The 3% cap, which has been in place since 2018, needs to be temporarily paused for one year due to significant COVID-related inflation and how COVID credits for jurisdictions for permissible increases were calculated from artificially low levels. It is vital that WMATA's operating increases for one year, as proposed in the revised draft of the Consolidated Transportation Program, are allowed to proceed.

MCCC recognizes that funding WMATA's operations, as well as finding long-term solutions to ensure a financially viable transportation network, are vital priorities that need to be addressed. WMATA's role is of essential importance to the economic prosperity for the State of Maryland.

Unfortunately, WMATA's current fiscal structure is unsustainable. MCCC contends that taking this small, but important step as proposed in Senate Bill 126, will allow WMATA to continue its operations while granting additional time for consideration of long-term funding solutions for our regional transportation network.

For these reasons, the Montgomery County Chamber supports Senate Bill 126 and requests a favorable report.

The Montgomery County Chamber of Commerce, on behalf of our nearly 500 members, advocates for growth in business opportunities, strategic investment in infrastructure, and balanced tax reform to advance Metro Maryland as a regional, national, and global location for business success. Established in 1959, MCCC is an independent non-profit membership organization and a proud Montgomery County Green Certified Business.

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