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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
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COMMITTEE ON
OVERSIGHT AND GOVERNMENT REFORM
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INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS
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MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA
ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

March 19, 2018

The Honorable Mario Diaz-Balart
Chair
Subcommittee on Transportation, Housing
And Urban Development, and Related
Agencies
House Appropriations Committee
2358-A Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable David Price
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Transportation, Housing
And Urban Development, and Related
Agencies
House Appropriations Committee
1016 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Diaz-Balart and Ranking Member Price:

We write to request the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Transportation, Housing and Urban Development continue to provide the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) with $150 million in federal funds for critical capital and safety improvements.

The Passenger Rail Investment and Improvement Act of 2008 (PRIIA, PL 110-432) created this successful federal-state partnership under which the three WMATA jurisdictions collectively match this funding with another $150 million each year. Without federal participation, this successful funding partnership would unravel, leaving a massive shortfall in WMATA's capital budget.

WMATA is a $40 billion asset to the National Capital Region and is essential to the operation of the federal government, with federal employees representing approximately 42 percent of Metrorail's peak period customers. More than one-third of all Metrorail stations are located on federal property, serving federal facilities. Unlike other transportation networks in the nation, the WMATA system serves a unique vital national security role for the federal government, providing transportation for thousands of federal employees traveling to and from the Pentagon, Department of Homeland Security facilities, and the Federal Bureau of Investigation headquarters. On multiple occasions, the system has demonstrated it is vital during times of crisis, including evacuation for weather events and national emergencies.

For all of these reasons, Congress provided a unique authorization for WMATA, recognizing the special responsibility the federal government has to help "America's Subway" fulfill these functions safely and reliably. The federal PRIIA commitment to WMATA represents approximately 40 percent of WMATA's capital budget. Sustaining this commitment ensures WMATA can continue to address its critical safety capital needs. PRIIA funding has led to the acquisition of the new 7000 series railcars, the award of a $100 million contract to install a 700 MHz radio system to improve communications of public safety personnel, the replacement of second generation track circuits as identified by the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) to upgrade the train control system, and the now completed SafeTrack program which rehabilitated, replaced, and restored sections of track infrastructure. In summation, PRIIA enables WMATA to make critical and sustained investments in its railcars, rail system, track structures, station and passenger facilities, buses and bus facilities, and paratransit system.

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absenteeism by one third in the past year, eliminated approximately 1000 positions (or eight percent of its workforce), designated all managers as "at-will" employees, and increased non-represented employee health care contributions. The system also increased the spend rate of its capital program, slashed $100 million in spending to end Fiscal Year 2017 with a balanced budget, and closed the Federal Transit Administration's Financial Management Oversight audit with all corrective actions completed.

However, much progress remains. WMATA and the signatories to the WMATA Compact are committed to making the investments and reforms necessary to ensure that residents and visitors to the National Capital Region have access to a safe and reliable public transportation system. Virginia, Maryland, and Washington D.C. are working to establish the Metrorail Safety Commission, and the jurisdictions are advancing a proposal to provide WMATA with a dedicated funding source. The federal government has willing partners in the effort to provide accountability and support for this vital transit system.

We understand the Subcommittee faces difficult choices and must focus limited resources on essential services. We firmly believe that WMATA more than meets this criteria, and we respectfully request that the Subcommittee provide WMATA with the full $150 million authorized for Fiscal Year 2019. Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

GERALD E. CONNOLLY
Member of Congress

STENY H. HOYER
Member of Congress

ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON
Member of Congress

JOHN P. SARBANES
Member of Congress

JOHN K. DELANEY
Member of Congress

DONALD S. BEYER, JR.
Member of Congress

ANTHONY G. BROWN
Member of Congress

JAMIE RASKIN
Member of Congress