

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

March 18, 2016

The Honorable Susan Collins  
Chairman  
Committee on Appropriations  
Transportation, Housing, and  
Urban Development Subcommittee  
184 Dirksen  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Jack Reed  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Appropriations  
Transportation, Housing, and  
Urban Development Subcommittee  
125 Hart  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Murray and Ranking Member Collins:

As you work to put together the fiscal year 2017 Transportation, Housing and Urban Development Appropriations bill, we respectfully request that you continue to fund the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA), at the full amount authorized in the National Capital Transportation Amendments Act, included as Title VI of Division B of PL 110-432. The request we are making is in accordance with the President's FY17 budget request of \$150 million for WMATA. We greatly appreciate the support that you have shown WMATA by funding the Nation's Capital's transit system at \$150 million over the last five years and we would appreciate maintaining this commitment.

This is a vital transportation issue with direct implications on the effectiveness and efficiency of the federal government and the entire Washington, D.C., metropolitan area, and is important to growing U.S. manufacturing and transit infrastructure development. WMATA's compact jurisdictions are committed to providing 50 percent matching funding.

The FY16 Omnibus Appropriations bill contained funding to continue supporting a ten-year authorization for the Washington metropolitan area's transit system. Metro is at a critical juncture and is making progress in bringing this aging and historically underfunded system into a state-of-good-repair and improving safety throughout the system. Recent safety issues, including a high-profile fatal incident, have brought to light the urgent need to make further investments in order to keep Metro's riders safe. We feel the federal government plays a critical role and responsibility for helping WMATA live up to its commitments to improve and maintain the system, and this annual appropriation is critical to advancing that progress. This annual appropriation is critical to advancing this progress. A key component of the rebuilding effort is Metro's order of more than 400 new 7000 Series rail cars to the system. These cars, which are being built in Lincoln, Nebraska contain state of the art crashworthiness technology and will replace the oldest cars in the fleet, which have been a safety concern for decades. This order supports thousands of U.S. manufacturing jobs.

Also known as "America's Subway," WMATA was created in 1966 primarily to serve the federal government. Many Metrorail stations were built at the request of the federal government, and nearly half of all stations are located proximate to federal facilities. Federal employees comprise 40 percent of WMATA's peak ridership, and millions of others use the WMATA system (Metrorail, Metrobus, and Metro's Paratransit programs) each year to visit the Nation's Capital or conduct business with the federal government.

WMATA is also a critical component for ensuring continuity of federal government operations during an emergency, and federal recovery plans rely heavily on WMATA, which played a key role on September 11, 2001. Another key indicator of how important the system is to the functioning of the nation's capital, WMATA handled 1.5 million trips in a single day during the historic 2009 inauguration and was the most viable transportation option during this event. While ridership was lower during the 2013 inauguration, Metro was once again the most viable transportation option for attendees of inaugural festivities.

For these reasons, Congress saw fit to provide a unique authorization for WMATA, recognizing the special responsibility the federal government has to the WMATA system.

Before the enactment of the National Capital Transportation Amendments Act, WMATA operated the only major transit system in the country without a source of dedicated revenue. The result has been a system with burgeoning needs and shrinking resources. Recent tragedies on Metro underscore the need for infrastructure repair and maintenance to ensure the safe operation of this aging system.

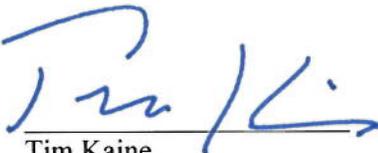
The \$150 million in capital funding is for projects included in WMATA's Capital Improvement Program and approved by WMATA's Board of Directors. The funds will be used to maintain the transit system in a state of good repair, including vehicles, facilities, and infrastructure. All of the funds are for capital improvements and none may be used for operating expenses.

The enabling legislation provides, for the first time, two seats on the Board of Directors for the federal government, represented by the General Services Administration. For this reason, we recommend that the funding be provided in the Senate's FY17 Transportation, Housing and Urban Development Appropriations bill. This is a unique federal obligation related to the operations of the federal government, and is critical for Congress to continue its support of the transit system that directly serves the federal government throughout the Greater Washington region.

Sincerely,

  
Benjamin L. Cardin  
United States Senator

  
Mark R. Warner  
United States Senator

  
Tim Kaine  
United States Senator