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May 19, 2020

The Honorable Ben Cardin
United States Senate
509 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington DC 20510

The Honorable Chris Van Hollen
United State Senate
110 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington DC 20510

The Honorable C.A. Dutch Ruppertsberger
U.S. House of Representatives
2206 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable John Sarbanes
U.S. House of Representatives
2370 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Kweisi Mfume
U.S. House of Representatives
2163 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Senator Cardin, Senator Van Hollen, Representative Ruppertsberger, Representative Sarbanes, and Representative Mfume:

Thank you for your leadership and support for public transit by providing desperately needed resources in the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act. That emergency support is helping enable public transit in Greater Baltimore to continue connecting essential workers with jobs, health care, and food, while also helping protect essential frontline transit workers.

Additionally, we appreciate that Congress has recognized that the depth of the crisis requires even more support for transit agencies. The HEROES Act (H.R. 6800) passed by the House on May 15 included an additional \$15.75 billion for transit, on top of the \$25 billion in the CARES Act. Unfortunately, the bill limits eligibility to Urbanized Areas (UZAs) with populations above 3 million people, of which there are 14 in the country.

With 2.2 million residents, the Baltimore UZA is the 19th largest and misses the cutoff. While it is understandable that Congress wants to target the relief package to those areas that need it most, we think using population as the basis does not fully capture a region's use of and need for public transit.

Although, Baltimore's total population is smaller than other regions, its residents use public transit at a higher rate. According to an analysis by the Eno Center for Transportation, despite being 19th in population, Baltimore ranks 10th in transit trips per capita. Regions like Phoenix, Houston, and Dallas would get transit funding from the HEROES Act despite having transit ridership rates less than half those of Baltimore. And that is during a typical year. During the current crisis, we are seeing that Baltimore residents rely on transit more than many other regions. Transit ridership has plummeted across the country, but some cities have seen greater drops than others. For example, according to an April 10 Maryland Matters article, subway ridership in Washington D.C. was down 95% and bus ridership was down 75% compared to the same time last year. For Baltimore, subway ridership decreased 75% and bus ridership decreased 51%.

According to an analysis prepared for us by TransitCenter, almost 40% of transit riders in Baltimore are employed in "essential services", with hospital and health care workers making up the largest share of those jobs. Tens of thousands of workers in Baltimore and around the state need transit to reliably get them to work during this crisis. We think Baltimore City is especially impacted because many of its major employers are in health care: Johns Hopkins Hospital, University of Maryland Medical System, MedStar Health, LifeBridge Health, and St. Agnes Hospital, among others. Of course, all of this is compounded by the almost one-third of City households without access to a car and residing in historically disinvested neighborhoods who rely on transit for essential trips to get food, supplies and healthcare.

Transit is essential here and we can't afford to let Baltimore be left out of any future federal stimulus or infrastructure packages. Thank you for your leadership and support for public transit.

If you or your staff have any questions or items you would like to discuss further, please feel free to contact me directly at 410-419-5374 or bomalley@cmtalliance.org.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Brian O'Malley". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the end of the last name.

Brian O'Malley
President & CEO

Cc:

Adrienne Jones, Speaker of the House, Maryland General Assembly
Bill Ferguson, Senate President, Maryland General Assembly
Delegate Brooke Lierman, Co-Chair, Maryland Transit Caucus
Senator Pam Beidle, Co-Chair, Maryland Transit Caucus
Delegate David Fraser-Hidalgo, Co-Chair, Maryland Transit Caucus
Senator Malcolm Augustine, Co-Chair, Maryland Transit Caucus
Delegate Marc Korman, Co-Chair, Maryland Transit Caucus
Delegate Erek Barron, Co-Chair, Maryland Transit Caucus
Steuart Pittman, County Executive, Anne Arundel County
Jack Young, Mayor, City of Baltimore
Johnny Olszewski, County Executive, Baltimore County
Ryan Dorsey, Transportation Committee Chair, Baltimore City Council
Kevin Quinn, Administrator & CEO, Maryland Transit Administration