



Commonwealth of Virginia  
General Assembly  
RICHMOND

February 13, 2017

The Honorable Elaine Chao  
Secretary of Transportation  
U.S. Department of Transportation  
1230 New Jersey Avenue, S.E.  
Washington, D.C. 20590

Dear Madam Secretary,

We read with regret the letter of February 10, 2017 from the executive director of the Federal Transit Administration to the Governors of Virginia and Maryland, and the Mayor of Washington, D.C. related to withholding certain transit funds from the three jurisdictions.

As elected representatives of the people of Virginia, we are keenly aware of the essential need for public safety generally, and for the need to improve safety of the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) Metrorail system. For this reason, representatives of the three jurisdictions worked with a sense of urgency and successfully drafted the common text of the Metro Safety Compact, which must be approved in identical form by the three jurisdictions to take effect. The three jurisdictions did so to comply with the February 8, 2016 directive from FTA to establish a State Safety Oversight Program, which specified a February 9, 2017 deadline.

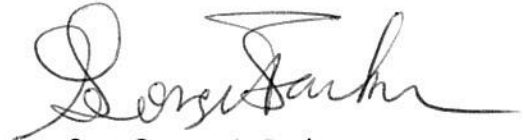
Apparently, the FTA was not aware at the time of its February 8, 2016 directive that the Virginia legislature is in session for only a few weeks a year starting each January. February 8, 2016 was long passed the deadline for introducing legislation for what was left of the 2016 session. We understand that representatives of Virginia pointed out to FTA some time ago that the February 9, 2017 deadline would fall in the middle of the 2017 General Assembly session, which started January 11, 2017.

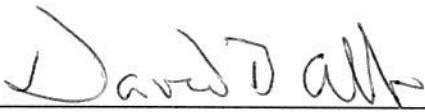
The text of the Metro Safety Compact drafted by the three jurisdictions in 2016 was introduced in the Virginia House of Delegates and the Virginia Senate last month at the beginning of the 2017 session as H.B. 2136 and S.B. 1251, respectively. These bills have already passed each house of origin. We have every expectation they will be submitted to Governor McAuliffe by the end of this month to be signed into law. If we could accelerate this process we would, but we hope you recognize that the General Assembly of Virginia is proceeding as fast as possible within the bounds specified in the Constitution of Virginia.


We therefore find it unreasonable that FTA withhold statewide transit funds for Virginia. We respectfully request that you suspend the February 10, 2017 FTA decision, at least as it applies to Virginia, while Virginia continues to make its best efforts to enact the Metro Safety Commission and take the necessary follow up steps to make it operational. Moreover, we call your attention to the need to consider revisions to the 50-year old WMATA Compact. We urge you to take the lead in bringing the three jurisdictions together to do so. In our view, the WMATA Compact's limitations not only leave WMATA's long-term financial stability in doubt, but contributed to the safety problems that initiated the need for the forthcoming Metro Safety Commission.

Sincerely,


  
Del. James M. LeMunyon  
Chief Patron H.B. 2136

  
Sen. George L. Barker  
Chief Patron S.B. 1251

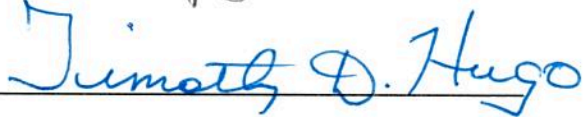
  
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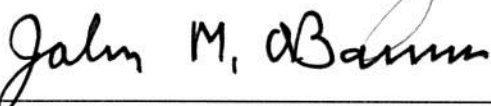
  
JASON MIYARES

  
Scott Garrett MD

  
David L. Bulova

  
L. SCOTT LINGAMFELTER

  
Timothy D. Hugo

  
John M. Barron

  
Ron Villanueva

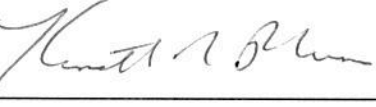
  
Anita Weber

  
MARK KEAM

  
Betsy B. Carr

  
Vivian E. Watts

  
Mark D. Lichler

  
Kenneth A. Blum

*Patrick Hope*  
Patrick Hope

*Eileen Filler-Corn*  
EILEEN FILLER-CORN

*Dawn S. Hester*

*Marcus Simon*  
MARCUS SIMON

*John J. Bell*  
John J. Bell

*Joseph C. Lindsey*  
Joseph C. Lindsey

*Paul Krizek*  
Paul Krizek

*Kathleen Murphy*  
KATHLEEN MURPHY

*J. Lorcas McDunn*  
J. LORCAS McDUNN

*Roslyn Tyfer*  
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*Jeion A. Ward*  
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*Dave J. Toscano*  
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*Richard (R.P.) Sullivan, Jr.*


*Alfonso H. Lopez*  
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Les R. Adams

  
Christopher T. Head

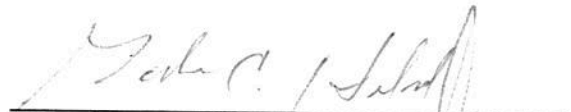
  
Riley E. Ingkarn


  
Jimmy Lee


  
Liz RO

  
Dave Marshall

  
Mark Decker

  
Mark C. Smith

  
Hyland F. Fowler, Jr.

  
Sam Rasoul

  
Lashrecce D. Aird

  
C.E. CLIFF HAYES, JR

  
JEFF BOURNE

  
Michael P. Mullin

J. B. Bardis

Mark H. Levine  
MARK H. LEVINE

Kaye Kory  
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Richard A. Bue

Thomas A. Green  
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S. Chris Jones  
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Stephen E. Heretick  
STEPHEN E. HERETICK

Larry Berg  
Larry Berg

Carole W. Howfield

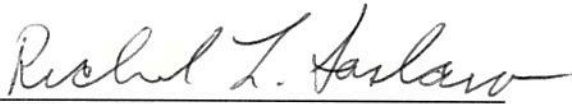
J. Randall Minchen  
J. Randall Minchen, 10th District

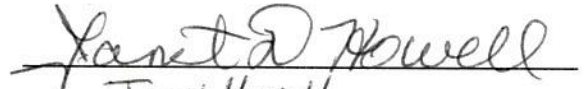
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David J. Rock

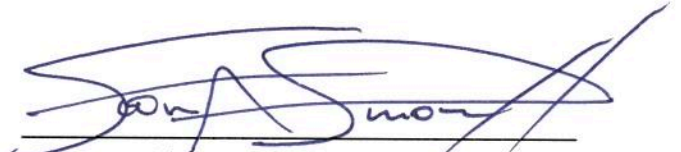
Robert D. Marshall

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Richard Saslaw

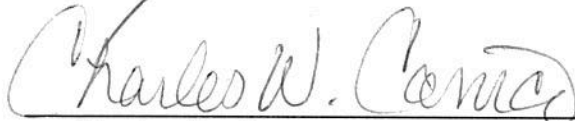
  
Janet Howell

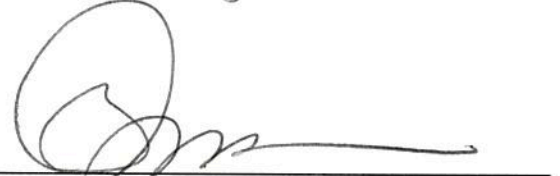
  
Barbara Favola

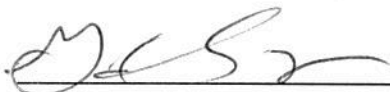
  
Scott Sarovell

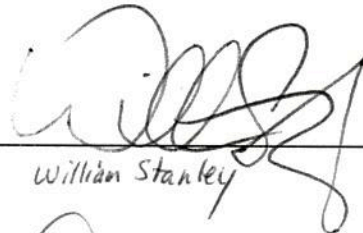
  
Richard Black


  
Jill Vogel

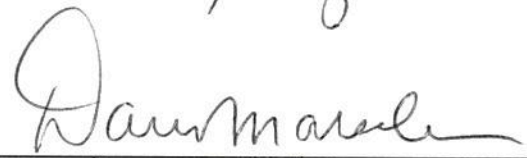
  
Charles Carrico


  
Bryce Reeves

  
Glen Sturtevant

  
William Stanley


  
John Petersen

  
DAVID MARSDEN

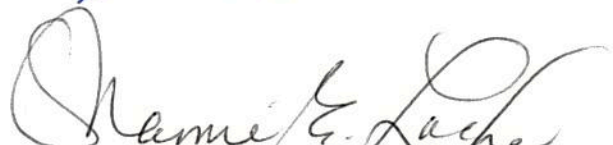
  
Adam P. Ebbin

  
Howard W. Lewis Jr

  
Jennifer Weston


  
ROBERT M. PIKE


  
Rosy R. Dace


  
Mamie E. Locke

Lionell Spruill Sr.  
Lionell Spruill, Jr.

MARK J. PEAKE  
MARK J. PEAKE

  
Frank Wagner

  
William Western

  
John S. Edwards

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