



## Press Release

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### **WMATA Safety Improvements Depend on Joint Action and Dependable Funding**

*NVTC Resolution Calls for Concerted Effort on Multiple Fronts*

**Arlington, VA** – Recognizing that safe and reliable Metrorail service depends on strong oversight, adequate resources and a positive safety culture, the Northern Virginia Transportation Commission (NVTC) called for the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA), Commonwealth of Virginia, U.S. Department of Transportation (U.S. DOT) and Congress to dedicate funding and take actions necessary to ensure the safety of Metrorail. “A strong focus on safety performance is critical to putting Metrorail back on track. But it alone isn’t enough to safeguard passenger safety,” said NVTC Chairman David F. Snyder. “Maryland, the District, and Virginia must move forward and authorize a permanent independent safety agency, WMATA must adhere to strong safety standards, and the federal government must provide dependable funding if Metro is to operate efficiently and effectively.”

NVTC’s resolution, approved Thursday night, calls upon WMATA to prioritize its investment in state-of-good repair projects and safety improvements and to enact policies and procedures at every level of the agency that support and emphasize safety. The commission endorses direct oversight of WMATA by U.S. DOT until Virginia and Maryland, along with the District of Columbia, authorize the establishment of an independent Metro Safety Commission.

Dependable federal funding of WMATA is essential to ensuring the safety of the system that the National Capital Region – including the federal government – relies on every day. “Congress must start by keeping its commitment to match the \$150 million per year provided by regional partners,” stated Snyder, referring to funding committed to WMATA under the Passenger Rail Investment and Improvement Act of 2008. Pending legislation in Congress would reduce the current-year federal funding to \$100 million. “Cutting WMATA’s appropriation by a third is counterproductive, since these funds are used to improve the rail system’s safety,” said Snyder. Because the money is matched by Virginia, Maryland and the District, a \$50 million federal reduction could become a \$100 million cut. “A loss of this magnitude would undermine efforts to ensure that Metrorail customers, including many federal government officials and international visitors, can count on a safe and reliable ride every trip.”

*NVTC brings the region together to ensure that Northern Virginia businesses and residents are served by a network of transit systems that allows our diverse region to thrive economically. NVTC funds and promotes transit in the counties of Arlington, Fairfax and Loudoun and the cities of Alexandria, Fairfax and Falls Church, a 1,000 square-mile region with a population of 1.7 million. NVTC includes eight bus systems as well as Metrorail and the Virginia Railway Express. For more information, visit [www.NoVaTransit.org](http://www.NoVaTransit.org) or call 703-524-3322.*

**## NVTC ##**



## RESOLUTION #2284

**SUBJECT: WMATA Safety Oversight and Compliance**

**WHEREAS:** NVTC recognizes that independent oversight and enforcement combined with strong safety practices and regular dependable investment in ongoing maintenance and replacement of Metrorail's physical assets are essential to providing safe and reliable rail service;

**WHEREAS:** Effectively addressing required corrective action plans associated with recent events including the L'Enfant Plaza tunnel fire, the derailment of a non-revenue service train, the fire in the Stadium-Armory power substation, and continued operational issues with the original Series 1000 as well as 4000 train cars is essential to the Agency's future;

**WHEREAS:** In 2012, the federal Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Act (MAP-21) provided the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) with greatly enhanced, independent safety oversight authority over rail transit and required the FTA to strengthen the authority of all State Safety Oversight Agencies (SSOA) including the existing WMATA body, the Tri-State Oversight Committee (TOC);

**WHEREAS:** In 2014, the Governors of Maryland and Virginia and the Mayor of the District of Columbia directed the creation of an independent Metro Safety Commission (MSC) as a legal entity - independent from the three jurisdictions and WMATA - fully authorized to provide independent WMATA safety oversight and enforcement in compliance with MAP-21 to replace TOC;

**WHEREAS:** On October 16, 2015, the United States Secretary of Transportation directed the FTA to assume temporary independent safety oversight authority of WMATA Metrorail and provide leadership direction to TOC until the new MSC is fully operational;

**WHEREAS:** The safe and reliable operation of Metrorail depends upon WMATA to prioritize funding for State of Good Repair projects in the FY2017 budget, expeditiously implement needed upgrades, and address all systemic operational issues that jeopardize safety and reliability;

**WHEREAS:** Under the Passenger Rail Investment and Improvement Act of 2008 (PRIIA), Congress committed to appropriate \$150 million each year for ten years towards improving the state of good repair on the existing Metrorail system, provided that the region matches this contribution; and

**WHEREAS:** Passage of federal legislation that reauthorizes and increases the federal commitment to maintenance and expansion of the nation's surface transportation infrastructure is critically needed by all transit systems in the nation.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the Northern Virginia Transportation Commission hereby urges WMATA to prioritize investments in State of Good Repair projects and safety improvements including addressing as priorities the corrective actions identified by the FTA, the National Transportation Safety Board, and the TOC, as these projects are fundamental to averting future safety problems.

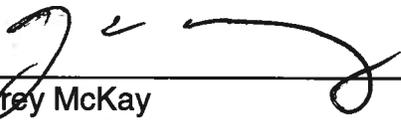
**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that NVTC hereby urges WMATA to enact policies and procedures, at each level of the agency, that support and prioritize safety.

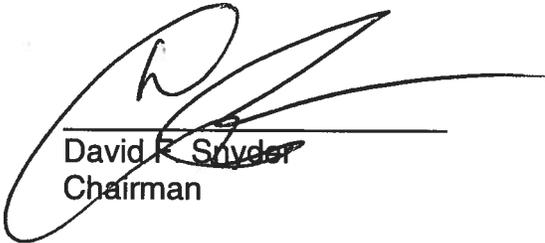
**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that NVTC supports the action of U.S. Department of Transportation Secretary Anthony Foxx to assume direct oversight of WMATA Metrorail from the TOC until such time that the MSC has been established, as required by federal law.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that NVTC, unless Congress provides appropriate funding to the FTA to execute fully the responsibilities for oversight of WMATA's Metrorail, hereby urges the Commonwealth of Virginia to expedite the authorizing legislation required to establish the MSC in order to create an independent entity, separate from the three jurisdictions and WMATA, with the power to conduct and enforce safety oversight; and with the ability to secure federal formula funds required to conduct a bona fide safety oversight program.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the U.S. Department of Transportation and the U.S. Congress provide resources required to complete its commitment to PRIIA and renew the federal commitment to fund projects in order to provide a long-term, stable source of funding so that WMATA can safely and reliably serve all the riders in the Nation's Capital.

Approved this 5<sup>th</sup> day of November 2015.

  
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Jeffrey McKay  
Secretary-Treasurer

  
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David F. Snyder  
Chairman