

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

October 24, 2018

The Honorable Jack Evans  
Chair, Board of Directors  
Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA)  
600 5<sup>th</sup> St. NW  
Washington, D.C. 20001

Dear Chairman Evans:

We write in opposition to the proposal to terminate the Riders' Advisory Council. At a time when WMATA is rebounding from years of deep safety and operational problems and rebuilding trust with riders, it is disappointing to see an effort that is interpreted as a lack of interest in public input. We hope you will reconsider your position on this and not vote to terminate the Council. It is important to show riders that WMATA is interested in hearing from the people it serves.

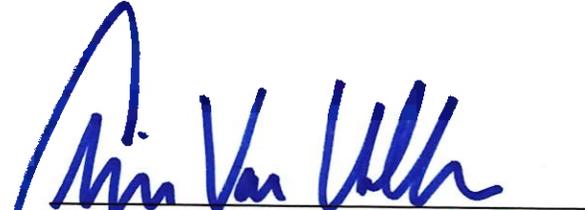
We appreciate the need to evaluate the most productive means of facilitating public input. If there is a need to restructure the channels through which WMATA receives feedback, that can be done without dissolving the primary entity through which the views of Metro riders can reach Metro leadership.

If WMATA's intent is to receive more public comment in written form, we suggest it adopt rules for public responsiveness similar to the provisions in federal laws like the Administrative Procedure Act and National Environmental Policy Act. Under these laws, federal agencies may agree or disagree with public comments, but they must, upon pain of litigation, substantively address all issues raised in comments. An equivalent requirement would give the public some certainty that their communications will be read and will not disappear into a digital void.

Metro has a long way to go to restore rider trust but has made significant strides, including in being forthright with the public about necessary inconveniences associated with long-deferred safety maintenance work. Dialogue with the public is a critical element of bringing Metro "Back2Good," and we hope you will not let this priority fade. We hope to learn from you why you support the termination of the Rider's Advisory Council and how you intend to proceed to ensure that the people who use the system will continue to be able to provide feedback.

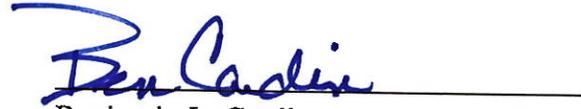
Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



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Chris Van Hollen  
United States Senator



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Benjamin L. Cardin  
United States Senator



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Tim Kaine  
United States Senator



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Mark Warner  
United States Senator