



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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## **MARYLAND & VIRGINIA SENATORS URGE FEDERAL FUNDING FOR WASHINGTON METROPOLITAN AREA TRANSIT AUTHORITY**

*Tragic metro crash highlights need for federal investment, Senators say*

WASHINGTON, DC – U.S. Senators Benjamin L. Cardin and Barbara A. Mikulski (Both D-MD), along with Senators Jim Webb and Mark R. Warner (Both D-VA) today sent a letter to the Chairman, Vice Chairman and Ranking Members of the Senate Appropriations Committee and the Appropriations Subcommittee on Transportation, Housing and Urban Development (THUD) urging them to provide \$150 million in federal funding for capital upgrades and improvements to the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority system.

All four Senators had separately requested this funding to be included in the fiscal year 2010 THUD Appropriations bill. In the letter sent today, the Senators emphasized the urgent need for this funding in light of yesterday's tragic Metro crash.

The text of the letter follows:

The Honorable Daniel K. Inouye, Chairman  
The Honorable Thad Cochran, Vice Chairman  
Committee on Appropriations  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Patty Murray, Chairman  
The Honorable Christopher S. Bond, Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Transportation, Housing and Urban Development  
Committee on Appropriations  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairmen, Vice Chairman and Ranking Member:

Yesterday's tragic accident highlights the urgency of upgrading the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority's (WMATA) metro system to insure the safety of our constituents. We urge you to give immediate attention to our request for \$150 million for WMATA.

We recognize that the National Transportation Safety Board must complete its investigation but initial reports indicate that this crash could have been prevented. News reports found that the train car that caused the fatal accident was an older model that federal officials recommended for replacement. It did not have a data recorder or modern improvements to stand up to a collision, and it was two months behind on its scheduled maintenance. We are advised that WMATA never replaced the car because it would have been too costly and complicated. Instead WMATA made improvements to the car to extend its service life.

The transit system in our Nation's Capital should have sufficient resources to improve safety and upgrade its aging infrastructure. This is why in the last Congress we championed legislation authorizing \$1.5 billion for WMATA over ten years (Public Law 110-432). As the entire nation saw firsthand yesterday, WMATA's aging infrastructure is in dire need for improvements and upgrades. The requested funding will be used for capital improvements that will prevent future fatal accidents. These federal dollars will be matched by Maryland, Virginia and the District of Columbia.

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