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SENATE APPROVES CHANGES TO METRO COMPACT, CONGRESS MOVES CLOSER TO PROVIDING DEDICATED FUNDING FOR METRORAIL

Washington, DC – **U.S. Senators Benjamin L. Cardin and Barbara A. Mikulski (both D-MD), with Senators Jim Webb and Mark Warner (both D-VA)**, praised the Senate today for adopting the final measure (S.J.Res.19) required to authorize \$3 billion in combined, dedicated federal and local funding for the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA). Late Tuesday, the Senate gave its unanimous consent and approval to amendments made by the State of Maryland, the Commonwealth of Virginia, and the District of Columbia to changes in the interstate compact governing the operation of the WMATA.

“I am proud that the Senate has acted unanimously to uphold our responsibility to the Metro System that is the transportation backbone for the federal government, our employees, and visitors to our Nation’s Capital every day and in times of crisis. After Congress passed the *Metro Funding Bill*, Maryland, Virginia and DC acted with great speed to approve the needed changes to the interstate compact. Our priority now is to continue to work together as a delegation in urging the Senate Appropriations Transportation Subcommittee, which currently is finalizing its funding bill for FY2010, to match the initial \$150 million for WMATA included in the House Transportation Appropriations bill,” **said Senator Cardin.**

“Last month’s tragic and deadly crash reminds us of Metro’s role in our daily lives. Safety must be our top priority so this never happens again. We know that America’s capital region can’t function if America’s Metro doesn’t function safely and efficiently,” **said Senator Mikulski**, a member of the Senate Appropriations Committee and its Transportation, Housing and Urban Development Subcommittee that provides federal funds to Metro. “As commuters brace themselves against a struggling economy, the federal government must take the burden off the local taxpayers and the commuters by meeting its funding responsibilities to make sure the region’s Metro system is safe and reliable.”

“The Washington area Metro system is a national asset, of potential benefit to millions of people who wish to visit our nation’s capital,” **said Senator Webb.** “Dedicated federal funding for the Metro system will provide necessary resources to assist in upgrading aging infrastructure to prevent incidents that jeopardize passenger safety, improve transit service and

meet forecasted ridership demands. I will continue working to secure proper funding to invest in our transit system and address our nationwide transportation needs.”

“This is a necessary and significant step as we work as a regional delegation to make continued investments in Metro,” **Senator Warner said.** “Continued congressional support for WMATA is key as we work together to encourage more commuters and visitors to use public transit and ease our region's traffic congestion.”

This compact amendment, previously agreed to by Maryland, Virginia and DC, makes the changes required by Federal legislation enacted last year which authorizes capital and preventive maintenance projects for the Washington Metro system. A Joint Resolution of Congress is needed to authorize any changes in interstate compacts. The House of Representatives introduced identical measure last month.

The *National Capital Transportation Amendments Act*, often referred to as the “*Metro Funding Bill*,” was included as Title VI of Division B of PL 110-432, legislation requiring significant improvement to rail safety nationally. The *Metro Funding Bill* authorizes \$1.5 billion over ten years for capital and preventive maintenance of the Metro system. These funds are matched dollar-for-dollar by Maryland, Virginia and DC.

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