



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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CARDIN, MIKULSKI, WARNER AND WEBB VOTE TO SEND METRO FUNDING BILL TO THE PRESIDENT FOR SIGNATURE

Regional Senate and House Leaders United in Support for Washington Metro System

WASHINGTON, DC – U.S. Senators **Benjamin L. Cardin** and **Barbara A. Mikulski (Both D-MD)**, and Senators **John Warner (R-VA)** and **Jim Webb (D-VA)**, today applauded their Senate colleagues for passing legislation that creates – for the first time – a dedicated, federal funding source for the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA). The authorization is included in a House-Senate agreement (H.R. 2095) that packages together a number of rail transportation and security priorities including Amtrak. The bipartisan bill overwhelmingly passed the Senate 74-24. Led by **Representatives Steny Hoyer (MD-5)** and **Tom Davis (VA-11)**, it passed the House of Representatives last week. It now heads to President Bush for his signature.

“Metro is back on track. Today we have taken a giant leap forward in securing dedicated funding for Metro so that it can meet the needs of the federal government, the millions of tourists who visit our Nation’s Capital, and the businesses that rely on the country’s second-busiest rapid transit system. This is good for our region and good for our nation,” said **Senator Cardin**. “Metro has been integral to the daily movements of the federal workforce and the economic health of our region. But it has been the only major public transportation system in the country without a dedicated source of funding. I am pleased that we were able to put ideology aside to renew and maintain such a vital source of strength for our region.”

“Not only has WMATA been one of the Washington D.C. metro area’s most-successful partnerships with the federal government, but more than half of Metro’s riders at peak times are federally affiliated employees. A large percentage of those are Virginia residents,” said **Senator Warner**. “I applaud Congress’ approval of this critical investment, which will help provide much-needed improvements to our stressed transit system while recognizing how vital Metro is to the region and the federal government.”

“Metro means more than just transportation - it means residents and visitors to our nation's capital can live, work, worship and play throughout the metro area without ever getting in their cars. As commuters brace themselves against high gas prices and a struggling economy, riders need our help,” said **Senator Mikulski**, a member of the Transportation, Housing and Urban Development Appropriations Subcommittee. “I am proud the Senate came together on a bipartisan basis to pass

this bill. I will keep fighting in the U.S. Senate to keep people on the go in Maryland and the entire National Capitol Region.”

“For the past two years, my colleagues and I have worked diligently to secure this vital funding for the Washington-area Metro system, which services an average of one million riders each workday,” said **Senator Webb**. “New funding authorized in this legislation will provide necessary resources to increase bus and rail capacity and meet forecasted ridership demands, before the system and region become mired in congestion.”

“The Washington Area Metro system is a critical national and regional asset that serves area residents, employees of the federal government and millions of annual visitors to the Nation’s Capital,” **stated Representative Hoyer**. “Securing a federal investment to ensure the safety and efficiency of this system is long overdue. This is a significant victory for the region and the nation.”

“This could not come at a better time,” said **Representative Davis**, who will retire from Congress at the end of this term. “As we have learned in recent weeks, Metro is in dire need of both an infusion of funding and adult oversight. Train cars and buses must be replaced. Platforms are crumbling. Other facilities need immediate attention. We need to stabilize the future of Metro, and this goes a long way toward addressing its long-term needs.”

The Washington Metrorail system is the second busiest rapid transit system in the nation, carrying the equivalent of the combined subway ridership of BART in San Francisco, MARTA in Atlanta and SEPTA in Philadelphia. Metrobus is the fifth most heavily used bus system in the nation. In all, the Metro system moves 1.2 million passengers a day. In the fiscal year (FY) which ended just three months ago, customers took 215 million trips on Metrorail. That is 7 million more than in FY07. And 133 million customers rode Metrobus in FY08, which is the highest yearly total ever, an increase of 1.4 million relative to FY07. Nearly half of Metrorail’s rush hour passengers are federal employees.

The legislation adopted today will help put WMATA on firm financial footing. It authorizes \$1.5 billion in federal funds over 10 years. For every Federal dollar, Metro’s funding partners in Maryland, Virginia and the District of Columbia will put up an equal match from dedicated funding sources. The bill also contains important financial safeguards. It establishes an Office of the Inspector General for WMATA and expands the Board of Directors to include federal government appointees. Also included in the bill is a provision that will improve cell phone coverage within the Metro subway system. Within one year, the 20 busiest underground rail station platforms will be required to have cell phone access. That requirement will go system-wide within four years.

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