



## **Written Testimony Presented to the Senate Budget & Taxation Committee**

**Hearing Date - January 29, 2025**

### **Senate Bill 20: Locally Operated Transit Systems – Mandatory Funding – Inflation Adjustment**

**Position: Support**

Chair Guzzone and members of the Committee, I am Jon Laria, testifying today in my role as Chair of the Baltimore Regional Transit Commission (BRTC).

The BRTC was created by the Maryland General Assembly to provide oversight and advocacy for the Baltimore regional transit system, which is operated by the Maryland Transit Administration (MTA), and to ensure that diverse stakeholder perspectives are represented in agency decisions. The BRTC includes representatives from local government, transportation, industry, business, transit riders, transit advocates, labor, and the Moore-Miller Administration.

I am very encouraged that this chamber continues to prioritize transit, and this bill is further evidence of that support. Senate Bill 20 proposes changes to the existing law regarding the Locally Operated Transit System Grant Program. These changes aim to provide financial stability and predictability for the program by tying appropriations to inflation.

The bill requires the Governor to adjust the appropriation for the Locally Operated Transit System Grant Program based on the growth in the Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U). This ensures that the funding for the program keeps pace with the cost of living and inflation, preventing budget shortfalls. The bill also includes a cap on the increase (5%), providing a safeguard against excessive budget increases.

The Commission regards the LOTS as vitally important to serve the needs of our citizens and businesses in the Baltimore region. These changes will promote their success, encourage ongoing sustainable development, improve public transportation access, and support economic growth across Maryland. I urge you to support Senate Bill 20 and help us achieve these important goals.

Thank you for your consideration.