



October 12, 2020

WMATA Board of Directors
Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority
600 5th Street, NW
Washington, DC 20001

Dear Chair Smedberg,

The Arlington Chamber of Commerce encourages the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority not to make the proposed reductions in service starting in December. Reducing service could lead to further economic consequences, the impacts of which are likely to be felt most strongly by people who can least afford them. The Chamber further encourages all levels of government, especially the federal government, to support WMATA in maintaining its current levels of service.

Maintaining the current service levels is essential to help riders feel comfortable that they can socially distance on Metro services. According to the Greater Washington Partnership's recent Capital COVID-19 Snapshot, 47% of employers in our region, and 54% in Arlington, are very concerned about their employees commuting via public transit. Limiting service to five trains per hour on Metrorail lines and reducing frequency on many Metrobus routes will make it harder for passengers to spread out onboard, reducing the likelihood that riders grow more confident in the system's safety.

The burden of transit service reductions will fall hardest on our region's service sector workforce. Many service workers have jobs that can only be performed in person and hours that run past 9:00 p.m. on weeknights or 11:00 p.m. on weekends. Service workers have already endured business closures and reduced customer demand. Raising their cost and difficulty of commuting risks personal economic effects, which are unlikely to be distributed equitably across our region.

We appreciate the financial challenges that WMATA faces on account of its diminished fare box revenue since March. As a public service, it's vital that transit lead for a sustainable recovery. If transit services lag, they may stifle the very return of passenger volumes for which they are waiting.

Thank you for your consideration of these comments.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kate Bates". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Kate Bates
President & CEO