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SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 69

Offered January 14, 2004

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Memorializing the Congress of the United States to undertake a new commitment to meet the funding needs of the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority.

Patrons—Whipple, Colgan, Howell, Puller and Ticer; Delegates: Brink, Ebbin, Eisenberg, Van Landingham and Watts

Referred to Committee on Rules

WHEREAS, the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) was created in 1967 by interstate compact and, by terms of that compact is an agency and instrumentality of the District of Columbia, the State of Maryland, and the Commonwealth of Virginia; and

WHEREAS, WMATA was created to plan, finance, construct, and operate a comprehensive mass transit system for the National Capital Region; and

WHEREAS, WMATA has successfully completed and today operates a 103-mile Metrorail system and a 1500-bus Metrobus system; and

WHEREAS, more than \$25 billion in economic development has occurred near Metrorail stations; and

WHEREAS, on an average workday, more than one million trips are made using the Metrorail and Metrobus systems; and

WHEREAS, the Metrorail system carries nearly 20 percent of all rush hour trips in the Washington metropolitan area and 40 percent of rush hour trips to and from the downtown core and removes more than 325,000 vehicles from the highways every weekday; and

WHEREAS, half of the Metrorail's peak period riders are federal employees and more than 50 federal agencies or employment centers are located adjacent to Metrorail stations; and

WHEREAS, the Metrorail system moves as many people each day as could be moved by 1,400 miles of new traffic lanes; and

WHEREAS, the Washington metropolitan area is a severe nonattainment area for ozone and has consistently failed to meet federal Environmental Protection Agency air quality standards; and

WHEREAS, continuing and expanded mass transit services are a critical part of the strategy to meet these air quality standards; and

WHEREAS, the Metrorail and Metrobus systems have reached a point where major investments are needed to keep the system properly maintained and respond to the needs of increased ridership and growing demand for transit services; and

WHEREAS, the current value of the Metrorail system is estimated to be \$24 billion; and

WHEREAS, the WMATA system has \$ 1.5 billion in critical needs over the next six years to protect, leverage, and secure this investment, which promotes economic development, relieves traffic congestion, and contributes to air quality improvement; and

WHEREAS, this \$1.5 billion in critical needs includes \$516 million for system maintenance and replacement, \$625 million to buy 120 additional rail cars and support systems so that eight-car trains can be operated to keep up with growing demand, \$171 million to buy 185 additional buses and their related support facilities to meet customer demand, and \$150 million in critical infrastructure protection needs to secure the investment; and

WHEREAS, the General Assembly of Virginia recognizes the critical role played by the WMATA Metrorail and Metrobus systems in maintaining the economic well being of the National Capital Region and enhancing the quality of life of its citizens; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the Senate, the House of Delegates concurring, That the Congress of the United States be hereby memorialized to undertake a new commitment to meet the funding needs of the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the Senate transmit copies of this resolution to the Speaker of the United States House of Representatives, the President of the United States Senate, and the members of the Virginia Congressional Delegation so that they may be apprised of the sense of the General Assembly of Virginia in this matter.