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SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 440
AMENDMENT IN THE NATURE OF A SUBSTITUTE
(Proposed by the Senate Committee on Rules
on February 4, 2005)

(Patron Prior to Substitute—Senator Whipple)

Supporting the recommendations of the Panel on the Analysis of and Potential for Alternate Dedicated Revenue Sources for the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA).

WHEREAS, the Panel on the Analysis of and Potential for Alternate Dedicated Revenue Sources for the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority recommends that the Compact jurisdictions of Virginia, Maryland, and the District of Columbia should mutually select, authorize, and implement a regional dedicated revenue source sufficient to address the projected shortfall for capital maintenance and system enhancement; and

WHEREAS, the most desirable, workable, and acceptable dedicated revenue source that the Compact jurisdictions can utilize, particularly since it captures funds not only from regional residents but from visitors to the area, is an increase of the sales taxes applicable to the area covered by the Compact; and

WHEREAS, fare increases should be implemented in a way that maintains the current farebox operating ratio averaging 57 percent, while taking into account the need to maintain healthy ridership levels; and

WHEREAS, the federal government is urged to participate significantly in addressing the projected shortfall for capital maintenance and system enhancement, since Metro service is a critical service for effective federal operations; and

WHEREAS, should the Compact jurisdictions conclude that a regional sales tax is not the most financially and politically viable dedicated revenue source, the Panel then recommends that the Compact jurisdictions mutually select, authorize, and implement a regional payroll tax, mutual and equivalent increases in ad valorem property taxes, or a special real property assessment based upon accessibility to mass transit in sufficient amount, together with federal contributions, to meet the WMATA shortfall; and

WHEREAS, the Panel also recommends a concerted effort, perhaps involving the formation of a new panel with expertise on this issue to focus on existing federal, state, and local social service funding; and

WHEREAS, the Panel has urged its three sponsoring agencies to "advance the work of the Panel by aggressively advocating on behalf of the Panel's findings, conclusions, and recommendations and take a lead role in building a coalition to support a dedicated revenue source for WMATA"; and

WHEREAS, the Metro System is a critical asset for the Washington region, including Northern Virginia, in the event of a natural disaster or terrorist attack; and

WHEREAS, some of the Panel's recommendations, including those relating to MetroAccess, require additional discussion; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the Senate, the House of Delegates concurring, That the General Assembly support the recommendations of the Panel on the Analysis of the Potential for Alternate Dedicated Revenue Sources for the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Governor be urged to work with Governor of the State of Maryland, the Mayor of the District of Columbia and federal officials to make the development of an implementation plan for the Panel's recommendations a top priority; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That such implementation plan be prepared in time for legislation to be introduced at the 2006 Regular Session of the General Assembly; and, be it

RESOLVED FINALLY, That the Clerk of the Senate transmit a copy of this resolution to the Governor of the State of Maryland, the Mayor of the District of Columbia, the United States Secretary of Transportation, the members of the Virginia Congressional delegation and the chairmen of the Panel on the Analysis of and Potential for Alternate Dedicated Revenue Sources, the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority, and the Northern Virginia Transportation Authority so that they may be apprised of the sense of the General Assembly of Virginia in this matter.