

October 4, 2007

Honorable Mitch McConnell
Minority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator McConnell,

I am requesting that I be consulted before the Senate enters into unanimous consent agreements on S. 1446, the "National Capital Transportation Amendments Act of 2007." I reserve the right to object to any unanimous consent agreements or rule waivers regarding this bill.

First, I am deeply concerned that this bill contains an authorization for \$1.5 billion in grants, but does not contain an offset for the cost of the new program. Without offsetting the cost of this bill, we are asking the average American family to pay \$10.36 in order to fund this bill, which is nearly the price of a week's worth of bus rides without actually getting to ride.

Second, I am concerned that numerous news accounts have detailed mismanagement of funds by WMATA, and that such problems should be addressed prior to Congress moving forward on providing any additional funding. On April 27, 2007, the *Washington Post* reported that sale of the D.C. Metro headquarters, and subsequent move to another location within the city, could yield as much as \$40 million for capital improvements. On June 5, 2007, the *Washington Post* reported that mismanagement had caused overtime costs to increase by 56% since 2002, costing \$91 million in 2006 alone. The *Washington Post* also reported on September 14, 2007, that WMATA has not been able to control costs to ensure that they remain below revenues, sparking the call from management for increased fares. This evidence points to a pattern of mismanagement that has resulted in the loss of tens of millions of dollars and a call for the largest fare hike in the history of the WMATA. These matters require resolution before the taxpayer should be required to direct \$1.5 billion to cover any needed funding issues.

Third, I am also concerned that the grant program is non-competitive, but rather authorizes funding to go directly to the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA). While the needs of WMATA might be significant, they should be balanced against the many other pressing needs vying for federal funding. I believe that the best way to ensure that high priorities are funded before low priorities is to require competition for federal grants.

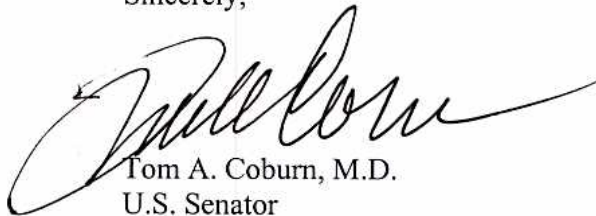
Fourth, the federal government already provides significant funding to the WMATA. According to FedSpending.org, the federal government has awarded \$495,473,629 in contracts to WMATA since 2000. Of the amount that the federal government has provided to WMATA, there is a program administered by the Department of Transportation known as the Federal Transit Benefit Program that is expected to continue receiving funding for the indefinite future. According to GAO, in 2006 the National Capital Region received \$140 million. Assuming that spending on

this program continues as is, rising only with inflation, it will match the \$1.5 billion price of S. 1446, bringing to the total 10-year subsidy from these two programs alone to \$3 billion.

Fifth, I believe that funding of this local transportation need should primarily come from riders as well as the governments of Maryland and Virginia. In this bill, taxpayers that will never utilize any WMATA transit services will be required to contribute half of the cost for capital improvements and preventive maintenance. Everyday, commuters all across the country are required to pay their own way to and from work. They might find it unfair that they are required to pay for the transit costs of those in the D.C. area. The arrangement in this bill for paying the costs does not reflect that the D.C. metropolitan transit system is primarily used as a means of local transportation for area residents and not primarily as a means to address matters of national importance.

Thank you for protecting my rights on this legislation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tom Coburn", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Tom A. Coburn, M.D.
U.S. Senator