

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-4606

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December 4, 2013

Mr. John E. Potter  
President and Chief Executive Officer  
Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority  
1 Aviation Circle  
Washington, DC. 20001

Dear Mr. Potter,

I write today to express my concern with the delay announced earlier this week to the completion of the first phase of the \$5.6 billion Metro Silver Line extension. With every additional month of delay, the traveling public suffers and millions of dollars in fare-box revenue are lost. As you finish critical safety testing, I urge that you do everything in your power to complete the work as quickly and responsibly as possible and avoid further delays so that our region's commuters and travelers can benefit from this crucial transportation link.

As you know, I have been a supporter of the work of the Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority (MWAA) for more than two decades, in my role as a member of the Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB), as Virginia's Governor and most recently as a member of the U.S. Senate. In addition, I also have been a long-time supporter of extending rail to Dulles International Airport and beyond. I was proud to stand with U.S. Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood and other Virginia leaders in March 2009 to celebrate the award of \$900 million in federal funds for the project's first phase. I worked closely with MWAA Board Members, Secretary LaHood and other Virginia leaders to make the tough decisions two years ago to shed roughly \$1 billion in projected costs from phase two in order to return that portion of the project to financial viability. I have also been a long-time and vocal proponent for securing a low-interest TIFIA loan for rail to Dulles that will keep costs down and minimize the toll increase Dulles Toll Road users will be burdened with to help pay for this project.

MWAA's announcement earlier this week of a three month delay due to testing of the Automatic Train Control System follows an unsettling pattern of project delays. This recent announcement follows the delay announced in June that pushed project completion from 2013 into 2014. I agree with your assessment that safety should be the uppermost priority in guiding your efforts, but I believe that can be responsibly achieved while also adhering to an agreed-upon project schedule.

With passenger service now pushed back to April 2014, every month of delay will cost the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) roughly \$2 to \$3 million in lost fare revenue. These losses occur in the context of a 2012 fare increase of 5 to 7% for Metro riders, and WMATA reportedly is considering an additional 9% increase in fares, between rail and bus operations, for Fiscal Year 2015. Further delays on the Silver Line rail extension will only further aggravate the financial pressures on WMATA, and ultimately could be paid by the region's commuters.

I strongly urge you to complete MWAA's testing in the most timely and responsible manner possible. I also am prepared to do everything I can to help you achieve this important goal for the taxpayers of Virginia.

Sincerely,



MARK R. WARNER  
United States Senator