

WASHINGTON, DC - Under the leadership of Congressman Steny H. Hoyer (D-MD), Congressman Tom Davis (R-VA) and members of the Washington regional delegation, the U.S. House of Representatives today approved a key regional and national transportation priority to provide \$1.5 billion in matching dedicated funding for the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA). The funding is deemed as essential to maintaining and improving WMATA infrastructure and services for area residents, federal workers and visitors to the Nation's Capital.

“The Washington Area Metro system is a critical national and regional asset that serves area residents, employees of the federal government and millions of annual visitors to the Nation's Capital,” **stated Congressman Hoyer**. “There is a clear federal interest in ensuring that ‘America's Subway,’ which was created by Congress, is able to operate safely and efficiently for years to come.”

The Metro funding measure was approved as an amendment offered by Rep. Hoyer along with Reps. Tom Davis and Chris Van Hollen to the Amtrak reauthorization bill. **This amendment is very similar to legislation introduced by Rep. Davis to authorize \$1.5 billion over ten years to help finance capital and preventive maintenance projects and require matching dedicated funds from Maryland, Virginia and the District of Columbia.**

“A world capital deserves a world-class transit system, and this will ensure we have one,” **said Congressman Davis**. “It will ensure the federal government can continue to function in case of natural or man-made disaster, and it will ensure the system can meet increased demands placed on it by the high cost of energy.”

Securing a joint federal-state commitment to WMATA has long been seen as essential to providing overdue capital improvements and maintenance for the system's aging infrastructure. Metro officials recently estimated that the system needs approximately \$489 million in urgent and outstanding infrastructure repair work. The system has been stressed every further with a rapidly growing ridership, in part due to rising energy costs in the region. According to a recent Washington Post story, “In April, Metro's ridership increased 4.3 percent over the same period the year before.”

"Metro's value to the region and the nation is immeasurable," **stated Rep. Hoyer.** "Not only is it indispensable as a transit system for residents of and visitors to the Nation's Capital, it is an essential component of the region's emergency evacuation plans. Now that this measure has passed the House, we will work with our colleagues in the Senate to overcome the hurdles in that body."

The federal commitment to the Washington Metro system dates back to 1960, when Congress passed and President Eisenhower signed into law legislation to provide for the development of a regional rail system serving the Nation's Capital, funding \$6.2 billion of the approximately \$10 billion needed to construct the original 103-mile system. Congress has since passed Metro authorization bills in 1965, 1969, 1979, and 1990.

Senate action on the measure is pending due to the objections Senator Tom Coburn (R-OK) who has blocked consideration.

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