

**WASHINGTON, D.C. – U.S. Senator Barbara A. Mikulski (D-Md.)**, Chairwoman of the Maryland Delegation, today chaired a meeting of the National Capital Region Congressional Delegation, calling on Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) officials to provide an update on the steps Metro has taken to improve safety and operational reliability.

Also participating in the meeting were **Senator Ben Cardin (D-Md.)**, **Congressman Steny H. Hoyer**, **Congressman Chris Van Hollen (both D-Md.)**, **Congressman Gerry Connolly (D-Va.)** and **Congresswoman Eleanor Holmes Norton (D-D.C.)**.

WMATA CEO and General Manager Richard Sarles and WMATA Chief Safety Officer James Dougherty presented the status of Metro's implementation of the Federal Transit Administration and National Transportation Safety Board recommendations for safety improvements.

"Today is not a day for finger pointing, today is a day for pinpointing what we need to do so that Metro is safe, reliable and gives real value for the taxpayer and rider dollar," **Senator Mikulski** said. "A week from today is the second anniversary of the deadly crash that took nine lives. I said on that tragic day: We must not forget. I have worked hard to keep my commitment to my constituents – those who work at Metro and those who ride Metro. Clearly, Metro is making significant progress improving safety and operational reliability. You can count on us to fight for dedicated funding and national safety legislation. In return, we count on you to complete implementation of the FTA and NTSB recommendations and put metrics in place to measure progress and performance."

"I find it unacceptable that the transit system in our Nation's Capital does not have enough resources to improve safety and maintain its aging infrastructure. When Metro was a relatively new system it was the epitome of safe and reliable public transit. After 34 years of operation, and a managerial focus on system expansion rather than system preservation, the backlog of maintenance needs have taken its toll," said **Senator Cardin**. "The tragedy of two years ago continues to serve as a reminder and inspiration for why we must all work together to fix the problems that led to the horrible loss of life. I look forward to continuing work with my colleagues, as well as with Metro's leadership, to solve Metro's problems of the past and ensure

a bright future for the Nation's Subway and transit system.”

“Keeping Metro operating safely and efficiently is a priority for our region and the federal government,” **Congressman Hoyer** said. “I appreciate the efforts that Metro has undertaken over the past year to implement the recommendations made by the FTA and the NTSB in the aftermath of the June 2009 Red Line crash. Long after the final recommendations are implemented, it is critical that Metro remain focused on the safety of its workforce and its riders and I look forward to working to ensure that that is the case.”

“Two years ago, our region experienced a terrible tragedy as two trains collided on the Red Line,” **Congressman Van Hollen** said. “That accident was a wake-up call for WMATA to fix structural and operational safety issues. The regional delegation remains committed to assisting wherever necessary, and I thank Mr. Sarles for continuing to brief us on progress and challenges.”

“Metro has taken tangible steps to address the safety concerns of Congress and the NTSB in the past year, but there are still more improvements to be made. This ongoing work highlights the importance of the federal, state and local funding partnership,” **Congressman Connolly** said. “The success of Metro is vital for commuters, the regional economy and the day-to-day operations of the federal government. Thankfully the regional delegation was able to restore funding that the House majority tried to eliminate earlier this year, and we will need to redouble our efforts to ensure the federal government does not default on this financial commitment in future years.”

“Metro's safety, security, and operations has been a priority for me well before we learned that seven of the nine people killed in the June 2009 metro crash were District residents. Today's regional hearing, like our subcommittee hearing planned for tomorrow in the House, helps keep Metro under the consistent oversight it needs,” **Congresswoman Norton** said.

The National Capital Region Congressional Delegation last met with Metro officials on May 5, 2010, after two employees were killed on the job and the Federal Transit Administration released an audit Senator Mikulski requested, exposing Metro and Tri-State Oversight Committee's serious safety problems. Since then, the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) concluded its investigation of the June 2009 crash and released its finding, cause of accident and recommendations.

Senator Mikulski has been an outspoken advocate for Metro safety. In March, she reintroduced the *National Metro Safety Act* to give the U.S. Department of Transportation (U.S. DOT) authority to establish and enforce safety standards. Congresswoman Donna Edwards (D-Md.) introduced the bill in the House. Everyone in the delegation is a cosponsor of the legislation. The bill mandates strong new federal standards for Metro systems nationwide and would require the U.S. DOT to work with the NTSB to implement their most wanted safety standards. Senator Mikulski also led the delegation's fight to secure \$150 million in federal funding in fiscal 2011 for safety improvements to Metro.