



NEWS RELEASE

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Metro Riders Hold Day of Action For Better Service, Without Fare Hikes

Message to Metro, Officials: Riders want better transit service, and stable funding, without fare hikes or service cuts.

Facing the specter of higher fares or potential service cuts, citizens are turning up the pressure on Metro and local public officials to address Metro's budget problems. Sierra Club volunteers organized outreach events at seventeen Metrorail stations in Maryland, Virginia and the District of Columbia on Wednesday, February 21.

Riders are calling on their Metro board members and public officials in the region, including Maryland Governor Martin O'Malley, D.C. Mayor Adrian Fenty, Fairfax County Supervisor Gerry Connolly, Alexandria Mayor Bill Euille, and Arlington County supervisor Chris Zimmerman to find effective solutions to Metro's budget crisis.

"The Sierra Club thanks the Metro Budget Committee and General Manager John Catoe for recognizing that service cuts and fare hikes would be counter-productive to Metro's mission, but bolder action is needed," said Damon Luciano, a leader with the Washington, D.C. Chapter of Sierra Club. "Service reductions and raised fares should be completely off the table, and our leaders should be making good transit service and stable transit funding a priority for all our jurisdictions."

Metro has cut in half its projected budget shortfall---once estimated at over \$116 million---through internal efficiency measures, and has opportunities to further close the gap with measures that aren't projected to deter ridership, such as higher fees for parking facilities or increased contributions from the jurisdictions. Long term, stable guaranteed funding is vital to end Metro's annual funding crises.

"Metro takes 580,000 cars off the road each weekday and eliminates more than 10,000 tons of pollution each year," noted Grace Cunningham, also with the Sierra Club. "Riders are already paying their fair share for a public service that benefits all of us."

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