

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

March 6, 2020

Mr. Paul J. Wiedefeld
General Manager and CEO
Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority
600 5th Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20001

Dear Mr. Wiedefeld:

As many organizations around the country formulate their responses to the recent outbreak and spread of the novel coronavirus, or COVID-19, we write to discuss the steps the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) is taking to protect employees and travelers who use Metro trains, buses, and other facilities throughout Virginia, Maryland, and the District of Columbia.

WMATA provides critical transit services for millions of people in the Washington D.C. region, including thousands of commuters and tourists. Each weekday, Metro trains carry an average of 634,000 passengers, with an additional 359,000 passengers riding Metro buses. Roughly 40% of Metro's daily ridership during rush hour consists of federal employees who are commuting to hundreds of federal facilities in the national capital region. The Metro transit system forms the backbone of travel infrastructure in our area, making WMATA's coronavirus preparations a critically important part of protecting Washington area residents and visitors to our region.

As the first cases of COVID-19 in the Washington D.C. region were confirmed in the last 24 hours, we appreciate that you have released information publically about WMATA's preparations, including activating the initial phase of its Pandemic Flu Plan on January 29, 2020, based on early reports that COVID-19 had the potential to reach pandemic status. We understand that subsequent phases will be activated following an outbreak of confirmed cases in the Metro service area. As part of the Pandemic Flu Plan, WMATA has stood up its Pandemic Task Force, chaired by WMATA's Chief Safety Officer. Metro has taken the following steps to date:

- Set up direct lines of communication with the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), local and state public health authorities, and other transit systems.
- Increasing Metro's on-hand warehouse inventory of essential supplies, such as hospital-grade disinfectant, wipes, face masks, gloves, hand sanitizer, and other items used by Metro's front-line employees.
- Established daily absenteeism monitoring across the workforce to quickly detect any significant change in employees illness patterns.
- Reviewed cleaning protocols and modifications where deemed effective and appropriate, based on medical guidance.
- Initiated regular communication with the workforce to keep employees informed about the disease, our response, and guidance to prevent the spread of illness.

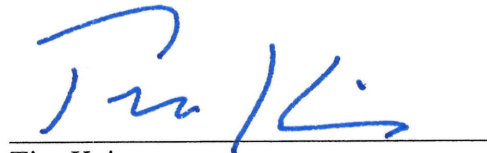
As are many Americans, we are concerned that with the fast-paced spread of the virus, it is inevitable that we will see additional cases in our area. We want to ensure every effort is being made to slow the spread of the virus through our travel centers – particularly our mass transit systems. While many Americans will need to practice social distancing in some way, we recognize that traveling via Metro, for many, is a requirement of their daily lives. That is why we hope that you will continue to do everything possible to ensure the safety of travelers who use Metro services in the coming weeks and months. The more we can slow the spread of the virus, the more time it gives healthcare professionals in our area to prepare, which will result in better care for those potentially affected.

As WMATA and the Pandemic Task Force continue to monitor COVID-19-related developments and activate Metro's Pandemic Flue Plan, we urge you to continue your devotion to passenger safety and the ability to quickly take necessary actions, and continue consulting with public health authorities. We also ask that you please keep us apprised of your ongoing response to the virus. We stand ready to help in any way we can.

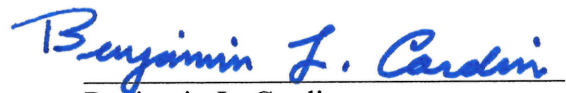
Sincerely,



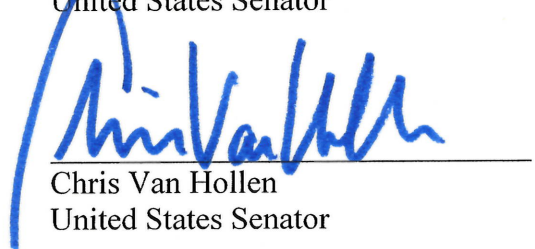
Mark R. Warner
United States Senator



Tim Kaine
United States Senator



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United States Senator



Chris Van Hollen
United States Senator