

GERALD E. CONNOLLY  
11TH DISTRICT, VIRGINIA  
2265 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING  
WASHINGTON, DC 20515  
(202) 225-1492

FAIRFAX OFFICE:  
10680 MAIN ST  
SUITE 140  
FAIRFAX, VA 22030

Congress of the United States  
House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515-4611

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT  
AND ACCOUNTABILITY

SUBCOMMITTEES:

RANKING MEMBER, CYBERSECURITY,  
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY, AND  
GOVERNMENT INNOVATION  
GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS  
AND THE FEDERAL WORKFORCE

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS

SUBCOMMITTEES:

INDO-PACIFIC  
MIDDLE EAST, NORTH AFRICA, AND CENTRAL ASIA

June 27, 2024

The Honorable Paul Smedberg  
Chair  
Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority  
600 5th St NW  
Washington, D.C. 20001

Dear Chair Smedberg,

I write to share my concern regarding the governance mechanisms currently in place that could hinder the independence of the Office of the Inspector General (OIG) of the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA). Ensuring robust, independent oversight is paramount for maintaining public trust and delivering a safe and reliable transit system. To this end, I respectfully request that the WMATA Board take immediate action on several critical issues.

The WMATA Board should request that the new, permanent WMATA Inspector General report on the status of the independence reforms that were required by the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA, P.L. 117-58). These reforms are vital to strengthening the independence and effectiveness of the OIG. As you know, the WMATA OIG previously reported to Congress that WMATA had not taken sufficient steps to implement key independence reforms required by the IIJA. It is my understanding that WMATA has taken some corrective actions in response to that report. An updated report from the new WMATA Inspector General, who started her term on June 17, 2024, would provide transparency and allow the new Inspector General to evaluate the implementation status of these important reforms.

The WMATA Board should also reverse its November 2022 decision to shorten the term of the Inspector General. The previous policy, which allowed the Inspector General to serve one five-year term with two optional additional terms, should be reinstated. The current policy of appointing the Inspector General to a single three-year term with one-year renewals undermines the independence required for the OIG to conduct thorough and effective oversight. A term of just one year does not provide the stability or autonomy necessary for the Inspector General to perform their duties without undue influence or pressure.

The WMATA Board should adopt policies and procedures that require "for cause" removal of an Inspector General. Such policies would align with the guidance provided by The Association of Inspectors General. The forced departures of the last two WMATA Inspectors

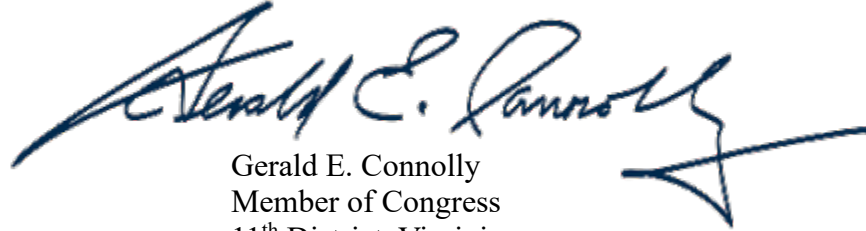
The Honorable Paul Smedberg  
Page 2 of 2

General underscore the need for clear and stringent "for cause" removal requirements. Implementing these policies would help ensure that removal decisions are transparent, made in the best interest of the transit system, and based on legitimate and well-documented reasons.

Taking these actions will significantly improve the governance and oversight of WMATA, fostering greater accountability, transparency, and public trust. I look forward to your prompt attention to these matters and stand ready to assist in any way necessary to ensure their swift implementation.

Thank you for your consideration.

Best Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Gerald E. Connolly". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end that extends to the right.

Gerald E. Connolly  
Member of Congress  
11<sup>th</sup> District, Virginia