

NEWS HIGHLIGHT

Washington Metrorail Safety Commission receives FTA certification

Mar 18, 2019



On March 18, the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) announced the certification of the State Safety Oversight Program of the Washington Metrorail Safety Commission (WMSC), the independent body now responsible for overseeing and enforcing safety practices on the region's transit system.

COG staff worked with the jurisdictions, the FTA, and the WMSC in establishing the commission through wide-ranging legal, technical, and administrative staff support.

The WMSC was created in 2017 by an interstate compact between the District of Columbia, Maryland, and Virginia. COG Board members Phil Mendelson, District of Columbia Council Chairman, George Barker, Virginia State Senator, Brian Feldman, Maryland State Senator, and Marc Korman, Maryland State Delegate, championed the compact legislation in their respective legislatures. Following the WMSC's inaugural meeting in 2018, COG continued to support the new organization as it hired staff and built its technical capacity in preparation of assuming its oversight role.

"Today's announcement by the FTA to certify the Washington Metrorail Safety Commission's safety program is an exciting milestone moment for our metropolitan Washington region," said COG Executive Director Chuck Bean. "It's not every day, or decade, that the District of Columbia,

Maryland, and Virginia come together to create a new regional organization with such significant responsibilities.”

In addition to the extensive efforts by Metro General Manager Paul Wiedefeld to prioritize safety as well as the region’s landmark dedicated funding agreement, the commission’s certification is another example of recent progress to ensure a safe transit system.

For more information about the commission, visit the [WMSC website](#).

Contact: **Steve Kania**

Phone: **(202) 962-3249**

Email: [**skania@mwkog.org**](mailto:skania@mwkog.org)



U.S. Department of Transportation
Office of Public Affairs
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590
<http://www.transportation.gov/briefingroom>

News

Monday, March 18, 2019
Contact: Steve Kulm
Tel.: (202) 366-9260

FTA Ready to Transfer WMATA Metrorail Safety Oversight to Washington Metrorail Safety Commission *Millions in Withheld Transit Funds Now Available*

WASHINGTON – The U.S. Department of Transportation’s Federal Transit Administration (FTA) today [certified](#) the Washington Metrorail Safety Commission’s (WMSC) State Safety Oversight ([SSO Program](#)). With this certification, responsibility for direct safety oversight of the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) Metrorail system will transfer from the FTA to the WMSC at the close of Metrorail’s regular service hours today.

In addition, approximately \$48.5 million in FTA grant funding, withheld due to the District of Columbia, Maryland, and Virginia missing a prior SSO Program certification deadline, is now available to transit agencies across the three jurisdictions to invest in public transportation.

“FTA is certifying the WMSC to perform the direct safety oversight of WMATA Metrorail,” said FTA Executive Director Matthew J. Welbes. “FTA appreciates the diligent cooperation of the WMSC during the transition process, and especially the actions and resources of the District of Columbia, Maryland, Virginia in reaching this important safety milestone.”

The FTA-certified WMSC SSO Program strengthens state safety oversight of Metrorail in several ways. It ensures that the program adopts and enforces relevant federal and state safety laws, has the authority to investigate and enforce safety plans of WMATA Metrorail, is financially and legally independent from WMATA, and has a well-trained staff.

FTA assumed temporary and direct safety oversight in October 2015 from the Tri-State Oversight Committee, the previous SSO Agency. Since then, FTA verified that Metrorail has fully implemented 188 [systemic safety improvements](#), and made progress on dozens of others, advancing a safer Metrorail system.

While FTA will no longer have direct day-to-day safety oversight responsibility for Metrorail, it maintains its general safety authority for all State Safety Oversight Agencies and rail transit agencies across the country.

###