



COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA
HOUSE OF DELEGATES
RICHMOND

JAMES M. LEMUNYON
POST OFFICE BOX 220962
CHANTILLY, VIRGINIA 20153-0962

SIXTY-SEVENTH DISTRICT

COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS:
GENERAL LAWS
EDUCATION
COUNTIES, CITIES AND TOWNS

August 11, 2014

Mr. Richard Sarles
General Manager and Chief Executive Officer
Washington Metropolitan Transit Authority
600 5th Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20001

Subject: Reduction of Service on the Orange Line

Dear Richard:

Congratulations on the Silver Line's start. For my part, I have alerted several thousand residents who I represent in Western Fairfax and Eastern Loudoun Counties to this new service and the many changes in bus routes that have accompanied the opening of the Silver Line. I hope that Silver Line ridership exceeds expectations. I rode the new line for the first time just a few days ago.

While the opening of the Silver Line has received much favorable public attention, it also creates much less publicized problems. I'd like to share some concerns with you, mindful that the decisions that led to these problems were made before the current WMATA leadership team was established (and before I was first elected to public office). Please know that my comments here are not intended to be critical of current WMATA leadership.

The primary problem created by the Silver Line is the fact that it operates by reducing peak period service on the Orange Line by 42 percent, from 19 to 11 trains per hour. Likewise, Blue Line peak period service has been reduced from seven to five trains per hour. These ten former Orange and Blue Line trains now comprise the Silver Line during peak periods, for a net increase of zero Metrorail peak period trains on these lines.

This is a reason that I refrained from supporting the Silver Line project. The Silver Line does not represent increased train service, but only cannibalizes previous Metrorail service—all for the Silver Line's \$6 billion price tag. As you are aware, the reason for no net increase in service is due to the fact that the Potomac River Metrorail tunnel was already at its capacity of 26 trains per hour during peak periods prior to the construction of the Silver Line, and remains so today.

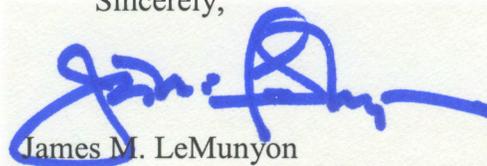
Mr. Richard Sarles
August 11, 2014
page two

Certainly, some past Orange Line riders should find it more convenient to use the Silver Line. I understand that many of the bus routes that have served the Vienna Station in the past are now serving the Wiehle Reston-East Station, and that new bus routes have been established. I hope this not only provides more convenience for many travelers in Northern Virginia, but helps alleviate the possibility of significant peak period crowding on the Vienna Station platform and overcrowded cars on trains to and from the Vienna Station. Time will tell.

However, for thousands of people who live near the Vienna Station and morning commuters on I-66 who drive or take the bus from points west of Vienna, going to Reston (and future stations) to use the Silver Line is not a realistic option. Unless there is a 42 percent reduction in Orange Line peak period ridership to correspond with the 42 percent reduction in service, previously crowded trains will be even more crowded. This could discourage Vienna Station "park and riders" and those who take the bus to Vienna from continuing to use the Orange Line. If so, there is a possibility this would have a negative impact on WMATA's revenues and lead to more congestion on I-66. For these people, the Silver Line has no silver lining.

During the past week, I traveled on the Orange Line between Vienna and Washington during peak periods. While it was not particularly crowded, I am concerned this may change after Labor Day. With this in mind, I would appreciate and value receiving regular updates from you regarding how WMATA is monitoring Virginia customer demand on both the Orange and Silver Lines, Virginia Metrorail revenue, and the extent to which plans are in place to adjust the frequency of trains on each line according to actual peak period customer demand. If it makes sense to move some peak period Silver Line trains back to the Orange Line to better match train service with customer demand on each line, I hope WMATA will not hesitate to do so.

Sincerely,



James M. LeMunyon