

Opening Statement
“Metro: Report Card for America’s Subway”

- Over the last few years, the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority or WMATA [pronounced *wah-mah-tah*] has faced serious safety and maintenance challenges.
- Metrorail is responsible for providing reliable train and bus service for the DC region.
- The tragic safety incidents of 2015 and 2016—including a deadly L’Enfant Plaza fire— were a much-needed wake-up call.
- The 2016 SafeTrack and Back2Good reform initiatives tackled seriously backlogged infrastructure safety and maintenance projects.
- Today’s hearing will examine status of WMATA’s efforts to improve safety, sustainability, financial responsibility, and accountability.

- This subcommittee's last hearing, in 2017, took place before the new, independent safety Commission formally took over the oversight of WMATA from the Federal Transit Administration.
- We look forward to learning more about the transition and the Commission's work.
- But Mr. Chairman, I think we can all agree that WMATA has a long way to go.
- A 2016 review by WMATA found a backlog of critical infrastructure maintenance and repairs.
- Under the Capital Improvement Program, WMATA plans to invest \$9.3 billion dollars into track, railcar, and station improvements over the next six years.
- The American taxpayer will contribute nearly \$3 billion dollars in federal grant funding.

- State and local taxpayers will contribute the remainder.
- Such a large investment requires accountability and results.
- However, recent events, such as the opening delay with Virginia's new rail line extension, demonstrate WMATA's continued challenges.
- WMATA faces a questionable financial future.
- With lower ridership trends, revenue will cover less than half the operating expenses this year.
- Maryland, Virginia, and DC will pay over a billion dollars to cover the gap.
- The safety of millions of riders and a massive taxpayer investment demands accountability of WMATA leadership.

- Given the ethics violations of WMATAs past leadership, combating further waste and fraud is a top concern for this Committee.
- I was glad to hear from staff that you are working on scheduling the Minority Day hearing that the Republican Members requested last month.
- We look forward to having that date in hand soon.
- It is imperative that we hear from a number of witnesses about what is going on at the top of the Metro board.
- Today's witnesses may not include everyone we need to hear from, such as Jack Evans, but they share a duty to assure WMATA's integrity.
- The ability to conduct independent oversight is needed for this accountability and we look forward to the WMATA Inspector General's testimony.
- I thank the witnesses and look forward to hearing about how we can work to make WMATA safe, secure, and successful.