

**MTA Proposes to Hike MARC Train Fares by As Much As 67% on June 25, 2015—
Riders Advisory Council Calls on Governor Hogan for Public Hearings Before Hike
Goes in Effect**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

WASHINGTON, DC—June 15, 2015—The MARC Riders Advisory Council today called upon Governor Hogan of Maryland to delay a hefty MARC fare increase—as much as 67% over current fares—slated to take effect on June 25 and to instead implement a minimal fare increase that is required by law until public hearings can be held. The fare hike, which would come just days before toll prices on Maryland’s roadways are slated to drop, would affect approximately 800,000 MARC riders a month, or approximately 36,000 riders a day. No MARC riders would escape an increase in fare.

The surprise fare increase hits weekly ticket holders the most. Riders from Baltimore and Point of Rocks, who currently pay \$52.50 per week, would see fares increase to \$80.00 per week (a 52% increase). Seabrook, College Park, and Gaithersburg weekly riders would see their tickets increase from \$37.50 per week to \$50.00 per week (a 67% increase). Furthermore, weekly tickets would no longer carry any discount over single one-way tickets under the proposed plan, significantly undercutting the utility of the multi-ride ticket.

Monthly and daily ticket holders are hit hard as well. Monthly riders from Baltimore would see tickets increase from \$175 to \$216 (a 23% increase). West Virginia riders would bear the biggest monthly bill from Martinsburg to DC at \$377 per month, up from the current \$330 per month (a 14% increase). The full spectrum of increases is attached in chart format to this release.

Under state law enacted in 2013, the MTA is required to implement an increase of \$1 per single ride ticket for both commuter trains and busses. The Council had discussed preliminary fare increase plans with the MTA over the past 18 months in regular public meetings, but the recently revealed plans for even higher increases on June 25 came as a complete surprise.

The rationale for the surprise hike on top of the earlier proposed increase has not been disclosed. The Council has called upon the Governor to instruct the MTA to meet the minimum fare increase requirement of an additional \$1 per ticket starting June 25 and to hold public hearings to discuss any expanded increases above and beyond the legal mandate.

“State law mandates an increase based on the Consumer Price Index change between 2009 and 2013,” said Steve Chan, Chair of the MARC Riders Advisory Council. “That increase is approximately 10.35%, yet we are seeing some fares jump by an incredible 67%.” The Consumer Price Index can be calculated at this website: <http://data.bls.gov/cgi-bin/cpicalc.pl>

The MARC Riders Advisory Council is a volunteer organization that meets monthly in Washington, DC with officials from the MTA, CSX, Bombardier Transportation, and Amtrak to discuss current proposals, rider concerns, and other issues. All meetings are a matter of public record and are open to the public attendance.

June 15, 2015

Dear Governor Hogan,

As you may be aware, the Maryland MTA is planning to implement a fare increase on MARC commuter train tickets later this month. We, the MARC Riders Advisory Council (MRAC), have learned that the fare increase is more severe than what the MTA initially proposed: as much as a 67% increase over current fares for some riders. The MTA has previously indicated in public, on-the-record meetings that the increase would likely be no more than 25% for those same riders (please reference the attached chart). While the MTA noted that this estimate was not final, they also indicated in those meetings that the estimate was likely. Something, on which the council was not briefed, clearly happened in between those meetings and today that changed the estimate.

Furthermore, it appears that the MTA now plans to restructure weekly tickets such that their value and their utility are almost entirely stricken, and that they may actually end up costing riders more money than just buying individual one-way tickets.

These discoveries are of significant concern to the Council and to the riding public, numbering approximately 36,000 riders a day. The legislation that the general assembly passed in 2013 requires only a \$1 fare increase per one-way ticket (please reference attached copy of the legislation). While the MTA may like to take this opportunity to remodel fare structures above and beyond what the legislation requires, our understanding is that any such further restructuring beyond the legal requirement must be presented via public hearings.

Therefore, we respectfully ask that you instruct the MTA to implement the \$1 fare increase on MARC one-way fares as required by law, and to recalculate the monthly and weekly fares using today's existing multipliers against the new one-way fares. Public hearings across the MARC service area should be held to address and discuss the enhanced fare increases that have been proposed.

Respectfully yours,

The MARC Riders Advisory Council

	Adult One-Way			Adult Weekly					Adult Monthly				
	Old Price	New Price	Percent Change	Old Price	Original formula <i>One-Way x 7.5</i>		Announced formula <i>One-Way x 10</i>		Old Price	Original formula <i>One-Way x 25</i>		Announced formula <i>One-Way x 27</i>	
					New Price	Percent Change	New Price	Percent Change		New Price	Percent Change	New Price	Percent Change
Travel within <u>one</u> zone <i>Examples:</i> Washington-Seabrook Washington-College Park Washington-Kensington	\$4.00	\$5.00	+25.00%	\$30.00	\$37.50	+25.00%	\$50.00	+66.67%	\$100.00	\$125.00	+25.00%	\$135.00	+35.00%
Travel within <u>two</u> zones <i>Examples:</i> Washington-Odenton Washington-Laurel Washington-Gaithersburg	\$5.00	\$6.00	+20.00%	\$37.50	\$45.00	+20.00%	\$60.00	+60.00%	\$125.00	\$150.00	+20.00%	\$162.00	+29.60%
Travel within <u>three</u> zones <i>Examples:</i> Washington-BWI Airport Washington-Dorsey Washington-Barnesville	\$6.00	\$7.00	+16.67%	\$45.00	\$52.50	+16.67%	\$70.00	+55.55%	\$150.00	\$175.00	+16.67%	\$189.00	+26.00%
Travel within <u>four</u> zones <i>Examples:</i> Washington-Baltimore (Penn) Washington-Baltimore (Camden) Washington-Point of Rocks	\$7.00	\$8.00	+14.29%	\$52.50	\$60.00	+14.29%	\$80.00	+52.38%	\$175.00	\$200.00	+14.29%	\$216.00	+23.43%
Travel within <u>five</u> zones <i>Examples:</i> Washington-Martin Airport Washington-Brunswick	\$8.00	\$9.00	+12.50%	\$60.00	\$67.50	+12.50%	\$90.00	+50.00%	\$200.00	\$225.00	+12.50%	\$243.00	+21.50%
Travel within <u>six</u> zones <i>Examples:</i> Washington-Edgewood	\$9.00	\$10.00	+11.11%	\$67.50	\$75.00	+11.11%	\$100.00	+48.15%	\$225.00	\$250.00	+11.11%	\$270.00	+20.00%
Travel within <u>seven</u> zones <i>Examples:</i> Washington-Aberdeen	\$10.00	\$11.00	+10.00%	\$75.00	\$82.50	+10.00%	\$110.00	+46.67%	\$250.00	\$275.00	+10.00%	\$297.00	+18.80%
Travel within <u>eight</u> zones <i>Examples:</i> Washington-Perryville	\$11.00	\$12.00	+9.09%	\$82.50	\$90.00	+9.09%	\$120.00	+45.45%	\$275.00	\$300.00	+9.09%	\$324.00	+17.81%
Travel to/from <u>West Virginia</u> <i>(six zones plus WV surcharges)</i> <i>Examples:</i> Washington-Harpers Ferry/Duffields	\$11.00	\$12.00	+9.09%	\$87.50	\$95.00	+8.57%	\$120.00	+37.14%	\$305.00	\$330.00	+8.20%	\$350.00	+14.75%
<i>(seven zones plus WV surcharges)</i> <i>Examples:</i> Washington-Martinsburg	\$12.00	\$13.00	+8.33%	\$95.00	\$102.50	+7.89%	\$130.00	+36.84%	\$330.00	\$355.00	+7.58%	\$377.00	+14.24%

West Virginia surcharges are: *One-ways = Maryland zonal price plus \$2 / Weeklies = Maryland zonal price plus \$20 / Monthlies = Maryland zonal price plus \$80*

Attachment 2: Specific Maryland General Assembly language only requiring a \$1 fare increase per one-way ticket

Page 17, lines 9-11: "every 5 years, increase one-way zone fare prices and the cost of multiuse passes to the nearest dollar for commuter rail and commuter bus service by:"

Page 17, lines 12-16: "At least the same percentage as the 5-year increase in the Consumer Price Index for all urban consumers as determined from January 1, 2009 to December 31, 2013, and each subsequent 5-year period for which the amount is being calculated; and"

Page 17, lines 17-20: "Any additional amount the Administration determines is necessary after considering factors affecting commuting costs applicable to the jurisdictions in which the Administration provides commuter service, ..."

According to the BLS CPI calculator (<http://data.bls.gov/cgi-bin/cpicalc.pl>), the CPI increase from 2009 through 2013 was 10.35%. Extending the span back to 2004 does give an increase of around 25%, but that's not what the law requires, and seems excessive for the "additional amount", especially seeing as the Federal commuter benefit is lower than it used to be.

1 **(2) BEGINNING IN FISCAL YEAR 2015, SHALL:**

2 **(I) ON A BIENNIAL BASIS, INCREASE BASE FARE PRICES**
 3 **AND THE COST OF MULTIUSE PASSES TO THE NEAREST 10 CENTS FOR ALL**
 4 **TRANSIT SERVICES EXCEPT THOSE SERVICES LISTED IN SUBPARAGRAPH (II) OF**
 5 **THIS PARAGRAPH BY THE SAME PERCENTAGE AS THE BIENNIAL INCREASE IN**
 6 **THE CONSUMER PRICE INDEX FOR ALL URBAN CONSUMERS, AS DETERMINED**
 7 **FROM JANUARY 1, 2012, TO DECEMBER 31, 2013, AND EACH SUBSEQUENT**
 8 **2-YEAR PERIOD FOR WHICH THE AMOUNT IS BEING CALCULATED;**

9 **(II) EVERY 5 YEARS, INCREASE ONE-WAY ZONE FARE**
 10 **PRICES AND THE COST OF MULTIUSE PASSES TO THE NEAREST DOLLAR FOR**
 11 **COMMUTER RAIL AND COMMUTER BUS SERVICE BY:**

12 **1. AT LEAST THE SAME PERCENTAGE AS THE 5-YEAR**
 13 **INCREASE IN THE CONSUMER PRICE INDEX FOR ALL URBAN CONSUMERS, AS**
 14 **DETERMINED FROM JANUARY 1, 2009, TO DECEMBER 31, 2013, AND EACH**
 15 **SUBSEQUENT 5-YEAR PERIOD FOR WHICH THE AMOUNT IS BEING CALCULATED;**
 16 **AND**

17 **2. ANY ADDITIONAL AMOUNT THE ADMINISTRATION**
 18 **DETERMINES IS NECESSARY AFTER CONSIDERING FACTORS AFFECTING**
 19 **COMMUTING COSTS APPLICABLE TO THE JURISDICTIONS IN WHICH THE**
 20 **ADMINISTRATION PROVIDES COMMUTER SERVICE, INCLUDING:**

- 21 **A. MONTHLY PARKING FEES;**
- 22 **B. THE RETAIL PRICE PER GALLON OF MOTOR FUEL;**
- 23 **C. THE AMOUNT OF ANY MONTHLY FEDERAL**
 24 **COMMUTING SUBSIDY;**
- 25 **D. FARE PRICES FOR INTERCITY RAIL SERVICE; AND**
- 26 **E. ANY OTHER RELEVANT COMMUTING COSTS; AND**

27 **[(2)] (3) May not reduce the level of services provided by the**
 28 **Administration for the purpose of achieving the farebox recovery requirement;**

29 **(4) MAY NOT INCREASE FARES FOR ALL TRANSIT SERVICES**
 30 **EXCEPT THOSE SERVICES LISTED IN PARAGRAPH (2)(II) OF THIS SUBSECTION**
 31 **BY MORE THAN THE AMOUNT REQUIRED UNDER PARAGRAPH (2)(I) OF THIS**
 32 **SUBSECTION;**