

Action Committee for Transit

www.acfortransit.org

P.O. Box 7074, Silver Spring, MD 20907

January 8, 2008

Mr. Michael Knapp
President, Montgomery County Council
100 Maryland Ave.
Rockville, MD 20850

Dear Mr. Knapp:

The Action Committee for Transit is gravely concerned about the reduction in Ride-On service that was announced last week. Given the continually worsening traffic situation in Montgomery County, we cannot afford to reduce transit services and force people to drive who don't want to.

Just one month ago, our General Assembly delegation won a pledge that \$10 million of the new state transportation tax revenue will return to the county as aid for Ride-On. Our legislators worked long and hard to secure this funding because they know that the county's commuters need help. Montgomery County voters are willing to pay higher taxes, but they expect to get value for their money, and our delegation insisted that some of the new revenues must go to relieve the travails of county commuters.

And what will legislators from other jurisdictions say in the future, when we seek help for our pressing transportation problems, if the help they gave us previously was diverted to other purposes?

If the county cuts Ride-On service at the same time that Ride-On is getting more money from the state's Trust Fund, the net effect will be to use Transportation Trust Fund revenues to cover the county's general operating deficit. When the Ehrlich administration used TTF money to cover an operating deficit, there were widespread complaints. The mistake has been corrected at the state level; it should not now be duplicated by Montgomery County.

We urge the county to use the new state aid to keep Ride-On expanding as planned to meet the county's needs. Individual bus routes are not sacrosanct — one of the keys to Ride-On's past success has been the reallocation of resources to put bus service where the riders are — but our growing and ever more congested county needs a growing bus service.

Sincerely,

Ben Ross
Vice President