



**House  
Legislative  
Analysis  
Section**

House Office Building, 9 South  
Lansing, Michigan 48909  
Phone: 517/373-6466

**DETROIT REGIONAL  
TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY**

**House Bill 4072 (Substitute H-4)  
House Bill 4074 as introduced  
Sponsor: Rep. Clark Bisbee**

**House Bill 4073 as introduced  
Sponsor: Rep. Alma G. Stallworth  
Committee: Commerce**

**First Analysis (2-4-03)**

***THE APPARENT PROBLEM:***

The Detroit Regional Chamber has said that the transportation system for the 4.8 million people who live in southeast Michigan is in crisis. They have identified the following problems:

*The existing network of freeways, local roads and bridges is aging, and becoming increasingly more overcrowded.*

*Existing public transit systems fail to meet the region's changing travel needs.*

*State and local funding for public transit in southeast Michigan is inadequate to maintain, much less grow, the existing regional transit system.*

*Outdated planning and land-use policies have failed to encourage growth and development which maximizes the use of the transportation infrastructure currently in place.*

*Fractured jurisdictional boundaries have rendered decision-making on transportation issues and services at the regional level ineffective.*

What is needed, says the chamber, is a seamless, coordinated regional transit system. The organization says that "access to a public transportation system that efficiently and effectively moves people throughout the region is essential to: attract and grow business; improve access to jobs and services; provide attractive transportation options which improve mobility; reduce traffic congestion; and improve our overall quality of life".

Towards this end, the Detroit Regional Chamber and a coalition of state and local government leaders has proposed the creation of a new regional transportation authority. Indeed, legislation to create

such an authority, commonly referred to as DARTA (an acronym for the Detroit Area Regional Transportation Authority) passed both houses of the legislature at the end of the 2001-2002 session, but was vetoed by Governor Engler.

DARTA is seen as a successor to the current Regional Transit Coordinating Council (RTCC), which was established under the Metropolitan Transportation Authorities Act. According to transportation specialists, the RTCC mainly functions as a pass through of state and federal money to transportation operating systems, notably the Detroit Department of Transportation (DDOT), which serves the city of Detroit, and the Suburban Mobility Authority for Regional Transportation (SMART), which serves the suburbs in Wayne, Oakland, and Macomb counties and provides express services from the suburbs to Detroit. The RTCC has four voting members, the mayor of Detroit and the county executives of Wayne, Oakland, and Macomb counties, and is said to meet infrequently. All actions must be authorized by unanimous votes. While the act governing the RTCC provides the council with planning and coordination functions, it specifies that the RTCC cannot exercise any rights, duties, or powers provided to a transportation authority and cannot employ operating personnel, negotiate collective bargaining agreements with operating personnel, or own operating assets of a public transportation service. DARTA, as proposed, would have these operating powers.

Transportation experts say that there has been coordination between DDOT and SMART, but they have also recommended that coordination be enhanced through an expanded role for the RTCC. According to the House Fiscal Agency, this was one of the recommendations (along with increased transit

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funding) of a consultant's report by KPMG Peat Marwick in July 2000. Moreover, the Southeast Michigan Council of Governments (SEMCOG) pointed to the need for improved governance of regional transit in its October 2001 report, Improving Transit in Southeast Michigan: A Framework for Action. SEMCOG has developed a comprehensive transportation plan for its seven-county southeast Michigan coverage area, and has described governance as one of the major challenges to implementing the plan.

### ***THE CONTENT OF THE BILLS:***

House Bill 4072 would create a new act, the Detroit Area Regional Transportation Authority Act. The new act would take effect June 30, 2003 and would establish a new regional transportation authority in five counties in the Detroit area. The Metropolitan Transportation Authorities Act of 1967 would be repealed as of the same date. House Bill 4073 would amend the Motor Bus Transportation Act (MCL 474.104) and House Bill 4074 would amend Public Act 51 of 1951 (MCL 247.660c, et al.), the act governing state transportation funding, to acknowledge in those acts the creation of DARTA.

The following are among the major provisions of House Bill 4072.

- Article Two of the new act would create the new authority (referred to as DARTA). The initial membership would be all counties, cities, townships, villages, and local government consortiums within a region comprising Macomb, Monroe, Oakland, Washtenaw, and Wayne counties. The authority would provide for public transportation facilities for the region. It would be an agency and instrumentality of the state with all the powers of a public corporation so long as they were exercised for planning, designing, constructing, operating, administering, acquiring, or contracting to provide public transportation facilities; maintaining, replacing, improving, and extending public transportation facilities; or exercising the powers of public transportation facilities. (The authority, however, would not be a state officer or agency with powers of control or statutory or constitutional responsibility within the meaning of Section 11 of the Urban Cooperation Act of 1967.) The authority would not have the authority to design, construct, or operate ports or airports, although it could convey the public to and at ports and airports. A "local government consortium", as referred to earlier, would be defined to mean a legal or administrative entity consisting of three or more political subdivisions in a

geographically contiguous area formed under Section 7 of the Urban Cooperation Act of 1967 and provided for in an interlocal agreement entered into under that act between cities, villages, or townships in the region. [Article One contains definitions of terms used throughout the new act.]

- Article Three would provide for the continuation of the existing Suburban Mobility Authority for Regional Transportation (SMART), which has as members Oakland, Wayne, Monroe, and Macomb Counties. Generally speaking, it would put in place provisions governing SMART similar to those that currently appear in the Metropolitan Transportation Authorities Act of 1967, under which SMART currently operates or else new provisions similar to those applying to DARTA. Article Three would take effect June 30, 2003.

- The new authority, DARTA, would become the designated recipient for the purpose of receiving federal and state mass transportation funding. Under the Metropolitan Transportation Authorities Act, the Regional Transit Coordinating Council (RTCC) is the designated recipient. The new authority, as with the RTCC at present, could designate a city with a population over 750,000 (Detroit), SMART, and other transit systems not included in cities over 750,000, as subrecipients of federal and state transportation funds. The new authority would also be authorized to withhold funds under certain circumstances (as described later).

- Under current law, the RTCC is the designated recipient of funding and has planning and coordination functions. However, the existing act specifies that the RTCC cannot exercise any rights, duties, or powers provided to an authority and cannot employ operating personnel, negotiate collective bargaining agreements with operating personnel, or own operating assets of a public transportation service within the metropolitan area. The new authority, DARTA, would essentially combine the planning and coordinating powers of the RTCC with the operating powers of a transportation system authority.

- The bill would retain many definitions and provisions similar to those in the act being repealed regarding the powers and duties of a transportation authority. These include provisions dealing with federal and state funding; tax exemptions; preparation of annual operating and capital budgets and of five-year capital budgets; review of budgets, audits, and construction plans by a regional governmental and coordinating agency; fixing rates,

fares, tolls, and rents; providing financial reports, including audits to the state; awarding concessions; the nature of claims against the authority; and competitive bidding, which would have higher dollar thresholds.

Key provisions of House Bill 4072 are summarized as follows:

Dedicated Funding Stream; Comprehensive Service Plan. Within one year after the selection of the chief executive officer, the authority would have to 1) present the initial comprehensive regional public transportation service plan to the legislature, governor, and the Department of Transportation; and 2) present to the legislature, the members of the House and Senate appropriations committees, and the governor its recommendations for legislation to fund the implementation of the comprehensive plan and for legislation to establish a dedicated funding stream for the authority. (The chief executive officer would have to be hired by March 20, 2004.) The service plan, which would have to be updated and presented annually, would have to contain: a specific plan for providing regional transportation for senior citizens, citizens with disabilities, and citizens without the economic means to provide their own personal transport; a cost-benefit analysis of the need for and effectiveness of the proposed plan, including an average cost-per-mile of service provided and an average cost-per-rider of service provided; an economic impact analysis of the ratio of public dollars expended on public transit services relative to the amount of private dollars invested in the region as a result of such services; a full accounting of all funding sources for the plan and, if any new taxes were called for, an analysis of how much each taxpayer, participating municipality, and county would pay versus what they currently pay for mass transit, and an analysis of how much of the tax or special assessment would be returned to taxpayers, municipalities, and counties in the form of public transit services; a discussion of how the plan provided for a fair distribution of services throughout the region; a discussion of how the specific and identifiable public transportation needs of the region were addressed in the plan; and a discussion of how the plan delivered measurable benefits.

Capital Budget/Operating Budget. The chief executive officer would be required to prepare, and the board approve, an operating budget and a capital budget for the authority each fiscal year. Each budget would have to be approved by the February 1 immediately preceding the beginning of the authority's fiscal year. The chief executive officer

and the board would also have to prepare and approve a program and operating budget to cover five years. The first capital program and operating budgets would have to be submitted to the board within 270 days after the selection of the chief executive officer.

Vote on Taxes. Any dedicated funding stream proposal that involved increasing an existing tax or implementing a new tax in the region could only be implemented if it was approved by a majority vote of the electorate in each county in the region. The question could only be placed on the ballot by a majority vote of the board of commissioners of each county, and the question would have to be put before the voters at the August primary in an even-numbered year.

Regional Coordination/Withholding Funds. Subject to the availability of funds, the authority would have to provide, or contract to provide, the services required for the implementation and execution of the comprehensive service plan and could contract with transportation operators within the region to provide services considered necessary to implement and execute the plan. The authority would coordinate all of the following functions between different owners and operators of public transportation (provided the coordination did not result in the reduction in represented employees employed by SMART or DDOT): service overlap; rates; routing; scheduling; and any other function the authority considered necessary. (This coordination would not apply to any private transit operators who had not contracted with the authority.) The authority would have to provide notices of its coordination decisions to owners and operators of public transportation, and any owner or operator within the region that failed to comply with a coordination decision would be ineligible for grant assistance from the authority and could not receive any operating or capital assistance grants from the authority. Also, to the extent possible, the authority would have to facilitate and encourage connections with other forms of transportation, including taxicabs.

Counties and Consortia Withdrawing and Joining. A county with a population of 750,000 or less that chose not to participate could withdraw by a resolution of withdrawal approved by a majority vote of the county board of commissioners. (This would apply to Monroe and Washtenaw counties.) A county with a population of more than 750,000 that did not contain a city with a population of more than 750,000 could withdraw as follows: 1) within 60 days the county board of commissioners by a two-thirds

vote would have to adopt a resolution placing the question of withdrawal on the ballot of the next regularly scheduled November general election and 2) a majority of the electorate within the county would have to approve the question of withdrawal at that election. If the county had an elected executive, he or she could veto a resolution to put the question on the ballot. (This applies to Oakland and Macomb counties.) A consortium of local units could also withdraw following a similar procedure, although a majority vote of a consortium's governing board would be sufficient to put the question of withdrawal on the ballot.

A county or local governmental consortium that withdrew would lose its seat on the board and could not, without a unanimous vote of the authority board, contract for public transportation services with the authority. The withdrawing county would have to pay or make provisions to pay all obligations to the authority. However, beginning 60 days after the withdrawing county gave notice of its intent to withdraw, the withdrawing county would incur no further obligation to the authority until the withdrawal was completed.

A county any part of which is not more than 90 miles from the city limits of the city of Detroit and which is contiguous to another county that is a member of the authority could become a member upon the adoption of a resolution by the majority of the county board of commissioners. If the county had an elected executive, he or she could veto the resolution; however, the veto could be overridden by a two-thirds vote of the commissioners.

Governing Board. The authority would be governed by a board consisting of two members from each city in the region with a population over 750,000 (Detroit); two members from each county with a population over 750,000 and less than 1.75 million (Oakland, and Macomb); two members from each county with a population of over 1.75 million that are not residents of a city with a population of over 750,000 (Wayne County outside of Detroit); one member from each county with a population of 750,000 or less (Monroe and Washtenaw); and, as a non-voting member, one member and one alternate from each local governmental consortium, selected by a majority vote of the consortium governing board. The first board would have to be appointed within 30 days after the new act took effect, and the first board meeting would have to be within 60 days after the new act's effective date. The city representatives would be chosen by the mayor, with the concurrence of a majority of the city council, and

each would have to be a resident of the city. County members would be chosen by the chief executive officer of each county, with the concurrence of a majority of the county commissioners, and a board member would have to be a resident of the county he or she represented. (The chief executive officer of a county would be either the county executive or, where there was no county executive, the chairperson of the county board of commissioners.) Members of the board would serve at the pleasure of the appointing chief executive officer and could be removed from the board by the chief executive officer at any time.

The board would have to meet regularly, but not less than quarterly, and would be subject to the Open Meetings Act. A board member could not designate another representative to take his or her place on the board. However, each county and city would have the ability to appoint one alternate to serve if a permanent member was absent from a board meeting.

Voting Procedures. The board would act by a majority vote of the membership entitled to vote. A vote for the adoption of bylaws, for the adoption of rules of procedure, or for the transaction of business would not be effective unless the vote included at least one affirmative vote from a member that represented a city with a population of 750,000 or more (Detroit) and at least one affirmative vote from each county immediately contiguous to each city with a population of 750,000 or more (Wayne, Oakland, and Macomb counties). A vote to change the name of the authority would have to be unanimous. The board could not engage in proxy voting.

Board Powers and Responsibilities. The board of the authority would be required to select and retain a chief executive officer; adopt bylaws and rules and procedures to govern board meetings; establish policies to implement day-to-day operations; review and approve the capital and operating budgets; conduct an annual audit; as required by state or federal law, review or review and approve the capital or operating budgets of SMART or other transit systems receiving funds or to which funds were disbursed; adopt the comprehensive plan; develop performance measures of the efficiency and effectiveness of public transportation services; develop and specify uniform data requirements to assess the costs and benefits of services; formulate procedures for establishing priorities; establish and implement a standardized reporting and accounting system under which transit system operators would make quarterly reports on revenues and expenditures and would submit annual and proposed budgets to the

authority; establish and implement standards relating to operating efficiency and cost control of transit system operators; and establish public transportation policy for the region. The board would have to employ an independent certified public accounting firm to provide annual financial audits for the authority and to review the audits of SMART and other operators of systems that received funds directly or indirectly from the authority. The cost associated with the audits and reviews would be the responsibility of the operator being audited. The board also would have to appoint a citizens advisory committee and a ridership committee.

The board would have the power to plan, acquire, construct, operate, maintain, replace, improve, extend, and contract for transportation facilities within the region; acquire and hold real and personal property, including franchises, easements, and rights-of-way through purchase, lease, grant, condemnation, and other legal means; apply for and accept grants, loans, and contributions from any source; sell, lease, or use any property it acquires; grant to public or privately owned utilities the right to property it acquires; grant to any other public transportation facility the right to use property it acquires; contract with, or enter into agreements with, any unit of government, including transportation authorities or public transit systems inside or outside the region, or with private enterprise for service contracts, joint use contracts, and contracts for the construction or operation of any part of the transportation facilities; borrow money; receive the proceeds of taxes, special assessments, and charges imposed, collected, and returned to the authority under the law; and exercise all other powers necessary, incidental, or convenient for carrying out the purposes of the new act.

Taxes, Pledging of Credit. Under the bill, the authority could not levy taxes and it could not pledge the credit or taxing power of the state or of any political subdivision except as specified. The authority could pledge the receipts of taxes, special assessments, or charges that the state or a political subdivision collected so long as the receipts of the taxes, special assessments, or charges were returnable and payable by law or contract to the authority. The authority could pledge the pledge of a political subdivision of the state of its full faith and credit in support of its contractual obligations to the authority.

Citizens Advisory Committee. The authority board would have to appoint a citizens advisory committee made up of region residents. The bill would require that 40 percent of the committee be users of public transportation and that 25 percent of the user

members be seniors or persons with disabilities. Wayne, Oakland, and Macomb counties would each have two public transportation user members, the city of Detroit would have two members who were users of public transportation, and the other counties would each have one public transportation user member. Also, 30 percent of the membership would have to be made up of individuals from organizations representing seniors and persons with disabilities and 30 percent of the committee would have to be made up of individuals representing business, labor, community, and faith-based organizations. The committee would have to meet at least quarterly. The committee would: review and comment on the comprehensive plan; advise the board regarding the coordination of functions between different owners and operators of public transportation facilities; review and comment on the specialized services coordination plan required by state law; and provide recommendations on other matters concerning public transportation to the board. There would also be a ridership committee established consisting of a representative group of public transit system riders living in the region. That committee would be responsible for reporting concerns to the board on a regularly scheduled basis. Further, a community or groups of communities in the region could create citizen advisory councils to relate concerns to the board on a regularly scheduled basis. These councils would have to be composed of members representative of the neighborhoods within the communities or group of communities.

Chief Executive Officer. The chief executive officer would administer the authority in accordance with the comprehensive regional public transportation plan, the operating budget, the general policy guidelines established by the board, the applicable governmental procedures and policies, and the new act. He or she would be responsible for the supervision of all authority employees. The terms and conditions of the chief executive officer's employment, including length of service, would have to be specified in a written contract. A chief executive officer would have to be selected and retained by March 20, 2004.

Employee Protections. The authority would have the right to bargain collectively and enter into agreements with labor organizations. For federally funded activities, the authority would have to enter into and comply with the arrangements that the U.S. Secretary of Labor certified as fair and equitable under federal law.

The authority would be bound by existing collective bargaining agreements with publicly and privately

owned entities that were acquired, purchased, or condemned by the authority. Members and beneficiaries of any pension or retirement system established by the acquired transportation system, and beneficiaries of any of the benefits established by the acquired transportation system, would continue to have rights, privileges, benefits, obligations, and status under the acquired pension or retirement system or benefits. The authority would have to assume the obligations of public transportation systems or transit systems acquired with regard to wages and salaries; hours and working conditions; sick leave and health and welfare benefits; and pension or retirement benefits, including retiree health care benefits.

No employee of an acquired transportation system who was transferred to a position with the authority could, by reason of the transfer, be placed in a worse position with respect to worker's compensation, pension, seniority, wages, sick leave, vacation, health and welfare benefits, or any other benefits enjoyed as an employee of the acquired system. Employees of the acquired system who left to enter into military service of the United States would have the same rights with respect to the authority as they would have had as employees of the acquired system.

Before beginning to operate any new transit service or public transportation facility, or entering into any new contract or other arrangements for the operation of the service or facility, the authority would have to extend to the employees providing public transportation services directly to or by contract with the authority, in order of seniority with the employee's employer, the first opportunity for reasonably comparable employment in any new jobs for which the employee could qualify after a reasonable training period. The authority would have to provide for the first opportunity required as just described in any contract to operate a new service or facility. Employers would have to comply with all collective bargaining agreements in accordance with the federal National Labor Relations Act and the state Public Employment Relations Act of 1947.

The authority could contract only with SMART and the Detroit Department of Transportation (DDOT) for any public transportation or related service that SMART or DDOT offered as of May 22, 2002 (unless those agencies had been declared ineligible for grant assistance under the act). The bill specifies that nothing in the new act would require the authority to provide funds to either SMART or DDOT beyond those received by the authority as the designated recipient.

Workers Disability Benefits. The state would have to guarantee the payment of claims for benefits arising under the Worker's Disability Compensation Act of 1969 during the time the authority was approved as a self-insured employer if the authority ceased to exist or was dissolved; a successor agency was not created to assume the assets and liabilities and perform the functions of the authority; and the authority was authorized to secure the payment of compensation under a special section of the workers' compensation act. The state would be entitled to a lien that would take precedence over all other liens in the amount of all the payment of the compensation claims. The lien would be on the assets of the authority.

Public Transportation Facility. The term "public transportation facility" in the bill would refer to all property, real and personal, public or private, used for providing public transportation. The term includes, but is not limited to, automated guideways, overpasses and skywalks, street railways, buses, tramlines, subways, monorails, rail rapid transit, bus rapid transit, and tunnel, bridge, and parking facilities used in connection with public transportation facilities. The term would not include taxis, limousines, state, county, or local roads, highways, ports, airports, motor bus charter services or operations not acquired by the authority or SMART, sightseeing services, private intercity bus services, or transportation used exclusively for school or church purposes. The bill would also define the term "transit system" as any individual, partnership, corporation, association, municipal corporation, limited liability company, public authority, public benefit agency, unit of government, or any person or entity other than the authority or SMART that provides public transportation.

### ***BACKGROUND INFORMATION:***

Opt Out Provisions. As introduced (and parallel to the version passed by the legislature last session), the DARTA legislation contained opt-out provisions as follows. A county with a population of 750,000 or less could withdraw by a majority vote of its board of commissioners. A county with a population of more than 750,000 (other than Wayne County) could withdraw as of January 1, 2006, if its board of commissioners by a two-thirds majority placed the question of withdrawal on the November general election ballot, and a majority of electors within each local unit voted to withdraw. A local government consortium could withdraw as of 2006 if its governing body by majority vote placed the question on the ballot and a majority of voters in each local unit within the consortium approved the withdrawal.

The definition of local government consortium would only apply to already existing consortiums in Wayne County.

As reported from the House Commerce Committee this session, the opt out provisions for a county with a population of 750,000 or less would be the same. For the larger counties (other than Wayne), a county could withdraw at any time if its board of commissioners by a two-thirds majority placed the question of withdrawal on the November general election ballot and a majority of the electorate within the county voted to withdraw. Further, a local government consortium could withdraw if the governing board by a majority vote placed the question on the ballot, and a majority within the consortium approved the withdrawal. Further, the definition of local government consortium would apply to any three political subdivisions in a geographically contiguous area (in any county) provided for in an interlocal agreement under the Urban Cooperation Act, and would not appear to require them to be already in existence.

DDOT/SMART. According to information from the Michigan Department of Transportation web site, the Detroit Department of Transportation's public transit system serves a population of about 1.028 million, and carried 41.6 million passengers in fiscal year 2001 with 597 vehicles. The system is supported, according to the House Fiscal Agency, by farebox revenue, state local bus operating assistance, and contributions from the city's general fund. The Suburban Mobility Authority for Regional Transportation serves a population of 2.36 million, and carried 10.15 million passengers with 430 vehicles in fiscal year 2001. The system is supported by farebox revenue, state local bus operating assistance, and a six-tenths of one mill property tax levied in Macomb County, most of Oakland County, and most of Wayne County, excluding the city of Detroit. (The HFA notes that the tax is levied not directly by SMART, but by the participating counties.) Both systems also receive state and federal capital assistance.

Other Information. The SEMCOG study referred to earlier is on that organization's web site at [www.semCog.org](http://www.semCog.org). The background and historical information from the House Fiscal Agency can be found on the legislature's web site at [www.michiganlegislature.org](http://www.michiganlegislature.org). Information from the Detroit Regional Chamber is on that organization's web site at [www.detroitchamber.com](http://www.detroitchamber.com).

## ***FISCAL IMPLICATIONS:***

The House Fiscal Agency reports that House Bill 4072 would increase local costs to the extent that it creates a new local agency and requires activities that have costs, including for example, the selection of a new chief executive officer for DARTA. The HFA points out, however, that the bill does not obligate the state or any local political entity to pay those costs. Instead, it requires DARTA, within one year after the selection of a chief executive officer, to present to the legislature, the appropriations committees of the House and Senate, and the governor recommendations for legislation to fund the implementation of a comprehensive regional public transportation service plan and for legislation to establish a dedicated funding stream for the authority.

The HFA also says that the bill would have no effect on the formulas that govern the distribution of federal and state operating assistance to transit authorities in the state. [The distribution formula is found in Public Act 51 of 1951, which House Bill 4074 would amend to acknowledge the creation of DARTA. The new authority would become the designated recipient for the purpose of receiving federal and state mass transportation funding instead of the Regional Transit Coordinating Council. The RTCC was created under the Metropolitan Transportation Authorities Act, which would be repealed when the new act creating DARTA took effect.]

(See the House Fiscal Agency's analysis of House Bill 4072, dated 1-30-03, which contains useful background and historical information on transportation systems and funding in Michigan.)

## ***ARGUMENTS:***

### ***For:***

One of the principal proponents of House Bill 4072 has said:

"With the establishment of a regional transportation authority, the . . . legislation would provide Southeast Michigan with the best opportunity it has ever had over the last three decades for development of the region's first, comprehensive regional public transit service plan. With this plan in place, area businesses and residents would finally receive the level and quality of seamless, efficient, and coordinated point-to-point service this region sorely lacks." Supporters say that there are proposals before the U.S. Congress to provide start up funding for DARTA, and action

should be taken quickly so that this funding will not be lost.

Initially, this proposal will create a regional transportation planning process and bring together representatives from throughout the metropolitan Detroit region. (Once a plan and sufficient funding were in place, the new authority could assume an operational role.) Note that the new authority must bring back a plan to the legislature and the governor, with recommendations for funding the plan, including a dedicated stream of funding, by March 2005. The aim of the legislation is to get representatives of the Detroit metropolitan area to come together to engage in that planning. The legislation does not itself create a plan or provide for transportation funding. It does not require a merger of transit systems. It does not grant DARTA taxing power. The legislation would provide wide representation on the authority board, with two members each from Detroit, Wayne County outside the city, Oakland, and Macomb counties and one member from other member counties, and would establish voting procedures that require at least one affirmative vote on policy matters from a member from the city and the largest three counties. It offers reasonable provisions for counties to withdraw or to join the new authority. It also offers reasonable employee protections while preserving operational flexibility. House Bill 4072 also provides for the creation of both a citizen advisory committee and a ridership committee for input from the public and customers.

**Response:**

House Bill 4072 as reported from the House Committee on Commerce differs from the legislation passed by both houses of the legislature in the 2001-2002 session in several significant ways. The primary proponents of DARTA support the earlier version, which they point out had the support of a fragile coalition. Amendments threaten this coalition. To cite one significant change, in its current form, the bill would make it easier for communities to opt out, would allow them to opt out earlier, and would allow smaller clusters throughout the region to opt out rather than just counties or large consortiums of local units in Wayne County. This could lead to a “checkerboard” for planning services, which would weaken the usefulness of the authority. The point of the legislation is to get the region as a whole addressing public transportation issues.

**Against:**

Representatives of organized labor testified that the House Bill 4072 does not provide sufficient

employee protections. They note that the bill says the authority would be bound by existing collective bargaining agreements with publicly and privately owned entities that were “acquired, purchased, or condemned” by the authority, but does not cover the situation where DARTA contracts with DDOT and SMART for services (as is likely to be the case). Labor representatives also say the bill should provide standards (e.g., cost savings) for any privatization of services to meet.

**Against:**

Representatives from the Conference of Western Wayne, a consortium comprising 19 municipalities and about 700,000 residents, notes that they would have — as a local government consortium — a nonvoting member on the DARTA board. The CWW has requested a voting seat. (Alternatively, the conference supported a defeated amendment that would have allowed the two Wayne County consortiums, the CWW and the Downriver Community Conference, to appoint the Wayne County authority board members outside of Detroit.) The conference also supports the opting out at the community or consortium level. The CWW further has requested the protection of certain projects that consortium members have entered into with SMART to provide customized transportation projects (such as senior citizen trips). They are concerned about provisions that would allow DARTA to withhold funds for such projects.

**Response:**

It should be noted that the portion of Wayne County located outside of Detroit will have two voting members on the DARTA board; these members will be selected by the elected county executive with the concurrence of a majority of the elected county commissioners. This is reasonable representation.

**Against:**

Some critics, notably a prominent taxpayers’ group, argued during the debate last session that the legislation threatened to add a new layer of government, unelected, with wide powers to use tax dollars and bonding to expand a bus system (or other mass transit) that many taxpayers do not need or want. They also warned that money needed for the current system will be diverted into election campaigns for broader powers and new burdens on taxpayers.



**POSITIONS:**

A representative of the Detroit Regional Chamber testified before the House Commerce Committee in support of the legislation as introduced. (1-3-02)

A representative from Wayne County testified in support of the DARTA legislation in the form that it passed the legislature last year and expressed concern about amendments. (1-30-02)

A representative of the Oakland County Executive has indicated support for the legislation as introduced and opposition to moving forward with House Bill 4072 if it is amended from the form that passed the legislature last session, other than a change in the effective date. (2-3-02)

A representative from the City of Detroit has indicated support for House Bill 4072 as introduced. (1-30-03)

The Michigan State AFL-CIO testified in opposition to the bill before the House Committee on Commerce. (1-30-03)

Analyst: C. Couch

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■ This analysis was prepared by nonpartisan House staff for use by House members in their deliberations, and does not constitute an official statement of legislative intent.