

WASHINGTON METROPOLITAN AREA TRANSIT COMMISSION

WASHINGTON, D. C.

ORDER NO. 1153

IN THE MATTER OF:

Served July 12, 1971

Application of Washington,)
Virginia and Maryland Coach)
Company, Inc., for Reduction)
of Service on Saturdays and)
Sundays.)

Application No. 698

Docket No. 230

The Washington, Virginia and Maryland Coach Company, Inc. (W. V. & M.) notified this Commission on May 20, 1971, of its intent to make reductions in its weekend service schedule effective June 20, 1971. The changes consisted of altering the base schedules of Routes 1, 2, 3, and 4 after 6:30 p.m. on Saturdays and Sundays and eliminating all Sunday service on Routes 3-S and 5-K; however, W. V. & M. subsequently decided to retain one Route 5-K schedule.

On June 17, 1971, the Fairfax County Public Utilities Commission submitted a protest to the proposed schedule reductions and requested a public hearing on the matter. Order No. 1150, issued June 18, 1971, granted the request for public hearing. While that order did not reach a final decision on the merits of the proposed schedule changes, neither did it suspend the schedule changes pending the hearing.

The Board of Supervisors of Fairfax County submitted an application for reconsideration of Order No. 1150 on June 25, 1971, and reconsideration was granted on the sole ground that notice to the public had been insufficient and that the proposed schedule changes should therefore have been suspended. Order No. 1152, issued June 29, 1971, suspended the service cuts indefinitely.

A public hearing was held on July 2, 1971, to determine whether the proposed service reductions were justified. W. V. & M. presented an operating statement of its experience during the 12-month period ended April 30, 1971, and testimony that it had not earned its "authorized rate of return" in any month since its fares were last adjusted by the Commission. Its president, S. A. DeStefano, stated that in order to improve this situation W. V. & M. has been reviewing its entire operation with a view toward eliminating its more unprofitable services and that Application No. 698 is a direct result of such a review.

The Board of Supervisors of Fairfax County appeared as a protestant. F. K. Kramer, Executive Secretary of the Fairfax County Public Utilities Commission, testified that several of the trips to be eliminated had substantial ridership and that in his opinion further studies should be made with the aim of making selective trip cuts rather than the headway changes proposed by W. V. & M.

In this regard, when the proposed schedule is compared with traffic counts on the existing schedule, one can find instances where certain cut trips carried more passengers than certain retained trips. However, the technical aspects of schedule making are such that, in order to achieve any significant savings, "blocks" or connected pieces of work for an operator must be selectively eliminated. An examination of the proposed service cuts shows that they have been applied with attention to the maximization of passengers on retained "blocks." Selective trip cuts would not result in an appreciable reduction in W. V. & M.'s costs, and therefore would be of no benefit. The service cuts as proposed by W. V. & M. alternate with retained service and there is no instance where the combination of passengers from a cut trip with those of an adjacent retained trip would result in an overcrowded condition. Beyond this, ridership patterns on weekend evenings are reasonably flexible. Since the service is to be regular, i.e., hourly, we do not believe the proposed adjustments would impose undue hardships on existing patrons.

Generally we do not like to see reductions in service; however, we are aware that service adjustments are necessary if W. V. & M. is to operate efficiently. The evidence of

record indicates that revenues from weekend evening service on the affected routes presently cover less than half of the expenses of operating that service. Further, Staff Exhibit No. 2 shows that the service cuts will eliminate over 1,100 operating miles per weekend, which will engender substantial economies for W. V. & M. We are convinced that the scheduled cuts proposed by W. V. & M. are justified and we believe that the changes should become effective without further delay.

THEREFORE, IT IS ORDERED:

1. That Application No. 698 of the Washington, Virginia and Maryland Coach Company, Inc., be, and it is hereby, granted, effective July 17, 1971.

2. That the Washington, Virginia and Maryland Coach Company, Inc., post notice in each of its buses on or before July 14, 1971 that revised weekend evening schedules have been adopted for Routes 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5, effective July 17, 1971.

BY DIRECTION OF THE COMMISSION:


DOUGLAS N. SCHNEIDER, JR.
Executive Director

