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Locals Take Issue with Feds Over Securing Mass Transit

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Washington (AP) - In the city that's home to the federal government, the idea that protecting mass transit is primarily up to the locals isn't going down well.

One day after Homeland Security Secretary Michael Chertoff made that pronouncement, some transit and government officials are fighting back Friday.

Metro Board Chairman Dana Kauffman calls those comments "very disconcerting." Kauffman points out that half of Metro's rush hour riders are federal workers - and he wonders if Chertoff is "saying to his own people, 'good luck.'"

At the Northern Virginia Transportation Commission - which co-owns VRE - spokeswoman Kala Quintana challenged the federal government to find an evacuation plan that doesn't include public transit.

And Mayor Anthony Williams calls Metro an example of a federal, state and local partnership that has worked very well. He favors the federal government taking the majority of the responsibility for protecting the system, with state and local agencies making a contribution.

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