

019128420

**SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 423**  
**AMENDMENT IN THE NATURE OF A SUBSTITUTE**  
 (Proposed by the Senate Committee on Rules  
 on February 5, 2001)  
 (Patron Prior to Substitute—Senator Edwards)

*Memorializing the Congress to appropriate funds for improvement of rail infrastructure in the Interstate Route 81 corridor.*

WHEREAS, the Virginia portion of Interstate Route 81 is among the most heavily traveled highway corridors in the United States; and

WHEREAS, Interstate Route 81 was originally designed to accommodate ten percent truck traffic, but, over time, the percentage of truck traffic has continued to grow, until the highway's traffic today is composed of approximately forty percent trucks; and

WHEREAS, this large number of heavy vehicles not only contributes to traffic congestion and exacerbates the severity of highway crashes, but also increases the frequency and the cost of highway maintenance and reconstruction on Interstate Route 81 and other highways in the corridor; and

WHEREAS, transferring freight from highway trucks to rail saves fuel, reduces congestion, minimizes air and water pollution, reduces highway maintenance and construction costs, and promotes safety; and

WHEREAS, Interstate Route 81 is paralleled for its entire length through Virginia by a railroad, much of which was initially engineered and constructed more than 100 years ago, and which does not currently provide a competitive alternative to the use of Interstate Route 81 by heavy trucks; and

WHEREAS, the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation has studied whether improvements to the parallel rail infrastructure are likely to result in the diversion of some of the interstate heavy truck traffic from Interstate Route 81 to the railroad, and whether investing public funds in improving the railroad infrastructure would result in measurable benefit to the public; and

WHEREAS, the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation study concluded that specified improvements to the rail infrastructure in the Interstate Route 81 corridor could divert to the railroad as much as 10 to 25 percent of the interstate truck traffic now moving and projected to move on Interstate 81, with a potential public benefit of as much as \$300 million to \$2 billion; and

WHEREAS, diversion to rail of such a substantial number of heavy trucks would reduce congestion, reduce maintenance and construction costs, reduce fuel consumption, reduce air and water pollution, reduce accidents, and is clearly in the public interest; and

WHEREAS, public funding of improvements to the railroad infrastructure, together with completion of the scheduled improvements to Interstate Route 81, would provide an example to the nation of the significant public benefits resulting from the use of public funds in providing a viable rail alternative for the transportation of interstate freight; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the Senate, the House of Delegates concurring, That the United States Congress be urged to appropriate funds for improvement of rail infrastructure in the Interstate Route 81 corridor. Such improvement shall ensure that the railroad that parallels Interstate Route 81 in Virginia provides a viable alternative to the use of Interstate for the movement of interstate freight traffic; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the General Assembly of Virginia support the conclusions of the study conducted by the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation and commend it to the United States Congress for consideration; and, be it

RESOLVED FINALLY, That the Clerk of the Senate transmit copies of this resolution to the Speaker of the United States House of Representatives, the President of the United States Senate, the Secretary of the United States Department of Transportation, and the members of the Virginia Congressional Delegation in order that they may be apprised of the sense of the General Assembly in this matter.