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HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 210
AMENDMENT IN THE NATURE OF A SUBSTITUTE
(Proposed by the House Committee on Rules
on February 10, 2002)

(Patron Prior to Substitute—Delegate Bloxom)

Requesting the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission to study the future of the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel.

WHEREAS, only 67 million commercial and passenger vehicles have crossed the 17.6-mile-long Chesapeake Bay Bridge-Tunnel (CBBT) complex since it opened in 1964; and

WHEREAS, the Chesapeake Bay Bridge and Tunnel Commission operates the CBBT, which spans the Chesapeake Bay at the entrance to Hampton Roads; and

WHEREAS, the CBBT was created to be a mighty stimulus to economic growth and development by connecting the Eastern Shore of Virginia to the metropolitan complex of Hampton Roads; and

WHEREAS, the CBBT is a vital commercial link for the Hampton Roads area and the entire Commonwealth; and

WHEREAS, current traffic over the CBBT has reached only the level originally projected to be reached in 1977; and

WHEREAS, failure to reach traffic projections caused the CBBT by 1976 to hold the dubious distinction of having the largest municipal bond default in the United States; and WHEREAS, the current rate of traffic increase is approximately three percent per year; and

WHEREAS, the CCBT has the highest toll per mile of any facility in the nation; and

WHEREAS, there is an initiative to reduce the tolls on the CBBT; and

WHEREAS, there is opposition to any toll reductions primarily among Eastern Shore residents who fear that such reductions may lead to an increase in demand for services, strain on infrastructure support, damage to natural resources, and a change in the quality of life on the Eastern Shore; and

WHEREAS, there have been several recent studies that address the issues of CBBT tolls, commerce, and economic growth on the Eastern Shore; and

WHEREAS, it is appropriate for the General Assembly to examine the findings of these studies in order to determine what if any changes should be made by the Commonwealth in order for this vital commercial link to best serve the needs of all Virginia citizens; and

WHEREAS, it is also appropriate for the General Assembly to study the management policies, practices, and operations (e.g. procurement, employment and hiring, salary structure, police and security force manning) of the CBBT Commission since it was created by an Act of the General Assembly but never subjected to review by that body; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission be requested to study the future of the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel.

In conducting its study, the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission shall examine the findings of all recent studies relative to the Chesapeake Bay Bridge and Tunnel and issue recommendations regarding the appropriate state role in determining the future of the CBBT. In its examination, the Commission shall pay attention to the:

1. Appropriate role for the CBBT in the economic growth and development generally in the Commonwealth and especially on the Eastern Shore;

2. Appropriate toll structure to ensure proper maintenance, sustain CBBT operations, meet debt obligations, and plan for needed capital improvements; and

3. Efficiency and efficacy of overall Commission management policy, practices, salary structure, and operations.

All agencies of the Commonwealth shall provide assistance to the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission for this study, upon request.

The Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission shall complete its work by November 30, 2002, and shall submit its written findings and recommendations to the Governor and the 2003 Session of the General Assembly as provided in the procedures of the Division of Legislative Automated Systems for the processing of legislative documents.