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SENATE BILL NO. 671

Offered January 19, 2006

A BILL to amend and reenact § 33.1-391.5 of the Code of Virginia, relating to duties of the Department of Rail and Public Transportation; state matching funds for federal FTA Section 5311 Rural Public Transportation program.

 Patron—Rerras

Referred to Committee on Transportation

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:**1. That § 33.1-391.5 of the Code of Virginia is amended and reenacted as follows:**

§ 33.1-391.5. Responsibilities of Department.

The Department shall have the following responsibilities:

1. Determine present and future needs for, and economic feasibility of providing, public transportation, transportation demand management, and ridesharing facilities and services and the retention, improvement, and addition of passenger and freight rail transportation in the Commonwealth;

2. Formulate and implement plans and programs for the establishment, improvement, development and coordination of public transportation, transportation demand management, and ridesharing facilities and services, and the retention and improvement of passenger and freight rail transportation services and corridors in the Commonwealth, and coordinate transportation demand management and innovative technological transportation initiatives with the Department of Transportation;

3. Coordinate with the Department of Transportation in the conduct of research, policy analysis, and planning for the rail and public transportation modes as may be appropriate to ensure the provision of effective, safe, and efficient public transportation and passenger and freight rail services in the Commonwealth;

4. Develop uniform financial and operating data on and criteria for evaluating all public transportation activities in the Commonwealth, develop specific methodologies for the collection of such data by public transit operators, regularly and systematically verify such data by means of financial audits and periodic field reviews of operating data collection methodologies, and develop such other information as may be required to evaluate the performance and improve the economy or efficiency of public transit or passenger and freight rail operations, transportation demand management programs, and ridesharing in the Commonwealth;

5. Provide training and other technical support services to transportation operators and ridesharing coordinators as may be appropriate to improve public transportation, ridesharing, and passenger and freight rail services;

6. Maintain liaison with state, local, district and federal agencies or other entities, private and public, having responsibilities for passenger and freight rail, transportation demand management, ridesharing, and public transportation programs;

7. Receive, administer and allocate all planning, operating, capital, and any other grant programs from the Federal Transit Administration, the Federal Railroad Administration, the Federal Highway Administration, and other agencies of the United States government for public transportation, passenger and freight rail transportation, transportation demand management, and ridesharing purposes with approval of the Board and to comply with all conditions attendant thereto;

8. Administer all state grants for public transportation, rail transportation, ridesharing, and transportation demand management purposes with approval of the Board;

9. Promote the use of public transportation, transportation demand management, ridesharing, and passenger and freight rail services to improve the mobility of Virginia's citizens and the transportation of goods;

10. Represent the Commonwealth on local, regional, and national agencies, industry associations, committees, task forces, and other entities, public and private, having responsibility for passenger and freight rail, transportation demand management, ridesharing, and public transportation;

11. Represent the Commonwealth's interests in passenger and freight rail, transportation demand management, ridesharing, and public transportation and coordinate with the Department of Transportation in the planning, location, design, construction, implementation, monitoring, evaluation, purchase, and rehabilitation of facilities and services that affect or are used by passenger and freight rail, transportation demand management, ridesharing, or public transportation;

12. Coordinate with the State Corporation Commission on all matters dealing with rail safety inspections and rail regulations which fall within its purview;

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- 59 13. Prepare and review state legislation and Commonwealth recommendations on federal legislation
60 and regulations as directed by the Secretary of Transportation; ~~and~~
61 14. Promote public transportation, ridesharing, and passenger and freight rail safety; *and*
62 15. *Provide sufficient state matching funds for the federal FTA Section 5311 Rural Public*
63 *Transportation program to guarantee that the local match required by the program does not exceed*
64 *25%.*