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## SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 5009

Senate Amendments in [ ] — April 19, 2006

*Establishing an Interstate Route 81 Commission. Report.*

Patron Prior to Engrossment—Senator Hanger

Referred to Committee on Rules

WHEREAS, the Virginia portion of Interstate Route 81 stretches from Bristol to Winchester at a distance of over 1,300 lane miles, making it the longest interstate in Virginia; and

WHEREAS, the portion of Interstate Route 81 that passes through Virginia is one of the top eight truck routes in the United States and a critical part of a major traffic corridor for the transportation of goods along the East Coast; and

WHEREAS, traffic levels along Interstate Route 81 have grown significantly over the past 40 years, with average daily traffic levels doubling in the last decade alone; and

WHEREAS, the number of fatal crashes on Interstate Route 81 has risen so dramatically in the past few years that Interstate Route 81 has become the deadliest interstate in Virginia; and

WHEREAS, there is significant concern in western Virginia over safety and capacity issues related to Interstate Route 81; and

WHEREAS, there is immediate concern about the negative impact on commerce and tourism because of the unsafe conditions and unpredictable delays; and

WHEREAS, there is not an adequate identified funding stream to address critical planning and construction issues; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the Senate, the House of Delegates concurring, That an Interstate Route 81 Commission be established. The Interstate Route 81 Commission shall study the feasibility of creating an authority to provide funding for needed safety and capacity improvements in the I-81 corridor.

The Interstate Route 81 Commission shall have a total membership of 11 members that shall consist of eight legislative members, and three ex officio members. Members shall be appointed as follows: three members of the Senate, representing senatorial districts that are contiguous to or west of Interstate Route 81, to be appointed by the Senate Committee on Rules, and five members of the House of Delegates, representing house districts that are contiguous to or west of Interstate Route 81, to be appointed by the Speaker of the House of Delegates in accordance with the principles of proportional representation contained in the Rules of the House of Delegates. Members of the Commonwealth Transportation Board from the Staunton, Salem, and Bristol districts, or their designees, shall serve ex officio with voting privileges. The Commission shall elect a chairman and vice chairman from among its membership, who shall be members of the General Assembly. The Commission shall provide opportunities for local elected officials from localities that border or are west of Interstate Route 81 to participate and contribute to the study.

In conducting its study, the Commission shall include, without limitation, recommendations and plans concerning (i) membership of the authority, (ii) powers of the authority, (iii) tolling options, (iv) options to facilitate freight movement to alternate highway and rail routes, (v) the feasibility of creating a scenic overlay district along portions of the corridor, and (vi) the funding and operation of state of the art welcome and hospitality centers and rest stops to enhance and promote tourism throughout western Virginia. The Commission shall be guided by goals that include, but are not limited to: (a) creating a toll network that is reasonable, broad based, and is not burdensome to commerce, tourism or local traffic, (b) producing adequate revenue that, when coupled with other available federal and state revenues, will support needed new infrastructure and maintenance needs, and (c) maintaining a sensitivity to the environmental, agricultural, and tourism-related attributes.

Administrative staff support shall be provided by the Office of the Clerk of the Senate. Legal, research, policy analysis, and other services as requested by the Commission shall be provided by the Division of Legislative Services. Technical assistance shall be provided by the Virginia Department of Transportation and the staffs of the Senate Finance Committee and House Appropriations Committee. All agencies of the Commonwealth shall provide assistance to the Commission for this study, upon request.

The Commission shall be limited to four meetings for the 2006 interim, and the direct costs of this study shall not exceed \$8,000 without approval as set out in this resolution. Approval for unbudgeted nonmember-related expenses shall require the written authorization of the chairman of the Commission and the respective Clerk. If a companion joint resolution of the other chamber is agreed to, written authorization of both Clerks shall be required.

ENGROSSED

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59 No recommendation of the Commission shall be adopted if a majority of the Senate members or a  
60 majority of the House members appointed to the Commission (i) vote against the recommendation and  
61 (ii) vote for the recommendation to fail notwithstanding the majority vote of the Commission.

62 The Commission shall complete its meetings by November 30, 2006, and the chairman shall submit  
63 to the Division of Legislative Automated Systems an executive summary of its findings and  
64 recommendations no later than the first day of the 2007 Regular Session of the General Assembly. The  
65 executive summary shall state whether the Commission intends to submit to the General Assembly and  
66 the Governor a report of its findings and recommendations for publication as a House or Senate  
67 document. The executive summary and report shall be submitted as provided in the procedures of the  
68 Division of Legislative Automated Systems for the processing of legislative documents and reports and  
69 shall be posted on the General Assembly's website.

70 Implementation of this resolution is subject to subsequent approval and certification by the Joint  
71 Rules Committee. The Committee may approve or disapprove expenditures for this study, extend or  
72 delay the period for the conduct of the study, or authorize additional meetings during the [ ~~2007~~ 2006 ]  
73 interim.