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HOUSE BILL NO. 1741

Offered January 10, 2007

Prefiled December 22, 2006

A *BILL to amend and reenact § 33.1-75.3 of the Code of Virginia, relating to construction and improvement of certain highways by counties.*

Patrons—Fralin, Crockett-Stark and Landes

Referred to Committee on Transportation

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:

1. That § 33.1-75.3 of the Code of Virginia is amended and reenacted as follows:

§ 33.1-75.3. Construction and improvement of primary or secondary highways by counties.

A. Notwithstanding any other provisions of this article, the governing body of any county may expend general revenues or revenues derived from the sale of bonds for the purpose of constructing or improving highways, including curbs, gutters, drainageways, sound barriers, sidewalks, and all other features or appurtenances conducive to the public safety and convenience, which either have been or may be taken into the primary or secondary system of state highways. Project planning and the acquisition of rights-of-way shall be under the control and at the direction of the county, ~~subject to the approval of project plans and specifications by the Department of Transportation. All costs incurred by the Department of Transportation in administering such contracts shall be reimbursed from the county's general revenues or from revenues derived from the sale of bonds or such costs may be charged against the funds which the county may be entitled to under the provisions of § 33.1-23.1, 33.1-23.2 or 33.1-23.4 provided, however, that prior to the acceptance of any primary or secondary highway constructed pursuant to this subsection into the state primary or secondary highway system, such county shall warrant and certify that such highway was designed and built in conformity with standards and specifications established by the Virginia Department of Transportation.~~

B. Projects undertaken under the authority of subsection A of this section shall not diminish the funds to which a county may be entitled under the provisions of § 33.1-23.1, 33.1-23.2, 33.1-23.4, or 33.1-23.05.

C. At the request of the county, the Department of Transportation may agree to undertake the design, right-of-way acquisition or construction of projects funded by the county. In such situations, the Department of Transportation and the county will enter into an agreement specifying all relevant procedures and responsibilities concerning the design, right-of-way acquisition, construction or contract administration of projects to be funded by the county. The county will reimburse the Department of Transportation for all costs incurred by the Department in carrying out the aforesaid activities from general revenues or revenues derived from the sale of bonds.

D. Notwithstanding any contrary provision of law, any county may undertake activities towards the design, land acquisition, or construction of primary or secondary highway projects that have been included in the six-year plan pursuant to § 33.1-70.01, or in the case of a primary highway, an approved project included in the six-year improvement program of the Commonwealth Transportation Board. In such situations, the Department of Transportation and the county shall enter into an agreement specifying all relevant procedures and responsibilities concerning the design, right-of-way acquisition, construction, or contract administration of projects to be funded by the Department. Such activities shall be undertaken with the prior concurrence of the Department of Transportation, and the Department shall reimburse the county for expenses incurred in carrying out these activities. Such reimbursement shall be derived from primary or secondary highway funds which the county may be entitled to under the provisions of this chapter. The county may undertake these activities in accordance with all applicable county procedures, provided the Commissioner finds that those county procedures are substantially similar to departmental procedures and specifications.

E. If funding for the construction of a primary or interstate project is scheduled in the Commonwealth Transportation Board's Six-Year Improvement Program as defined in § 33.1-12, a locality may choose to advance funds to the project. If such advance is offered, the Board may consider such request and agree to such advancement and the subsequent reimbursement of the locality of the advance in accordance with terms agreed upon by the Board or its designee and the locality.

F. Any county carrying out any construction project as authorized in this section may, in so doing, exercise the powers granted the Commonwealth Transportation Commissioner under Article 7 (§ 33.1-89 et seq.) of this chapter to enter property for the purpose of making an examination and survey thereof, with a view to ascertainment of its suitability for highway purposes and any other purpose incidental

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59 thereto.

60 G. For the purposes of this section, any county without an existing franchise agreement, when
61 administering a Department-sanctioned project under a land-use permit or transportation project
62 agreement, shall have the same authority as the Department pertaining to the relocation of utilities.

63 H. Whenever so requested by any county, funding of any project undertaken as provided in this
64 section may be supplemented solely by state funds in order to avoid the necessity of complying with
65 additional federal requirements, provided a determination has been made by the Department that (i)
66 adequate state funds are available to fully match available federal transportation funds and (ii) the
67 Department can meet its federal obligation authority, as permitted by federal law.