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HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 714

Offered January 14, 2009

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Directing the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission to study the funding and structure of the Commonwealth's passenger and freight rail transportation programs. Report.

Patrons—Valentine, Fralin, Scott, E.T. and Toscano

Referred to Committee on Rules

WHEREAS, the economic prosperity of the Commonwealth and the quality of life of its citizens and communities require a well-balanced and carefully managed multimodal transportation system in which highway transportation, waterborne transportation, passenger and freight rail transportation, and commercial and general aviation all play complementary parts to ensure the overall safety, adequacy, and efficiency of Virginia's transportation systems; and

WHEREAS, development of and improvement of Virginia's passenger rail programs and freight rail programs are the responsibility of the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation and must be carefully coordinated and adequately funded to ensure that they interrelate productively not only with one other, but also with other transportation modes; and

WHEREAS, in this regard, the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation, working with the Rail Advisory Board and the Commonwealth Transportation Board, has prepared a Statewide Rail Plan and an accompanying Statewide Rail Resource Allocation Plan that identify key projects and set out a six-year funding plan for the advancement of freight and passenger rail projects; and

WHEREAS, these plans propose the initiation of two state-sponsored intercity rail passenger demonstration projects and provide funding to support the operations of these services for a three-year period, and the plans identify the need for a dedicated, stable, and reliable source of funding for state-sponsored intercity passenger rail services beyond the three-year demonstration projects; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission be directed to study the long-term funding needs of the Commonwealth's passenger and freight rail transportation programs.

In conducting its study the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission shall consider, but not necessarily be limited to, the following:

1. The long-term operational and capital funding needs of the Commonwealth for both passenger and freight rail service improvements identified in the Statewide Rail Plan;

2. The sources and volume of funding required to cover passenger rail operating and capital costs;

3. The fairness, equity, and sufficiency of passenger rail operational support;

4. The local land use commitments that will help support the provision of passenger rail service, including the designation of urban development areas near railroad stations;

5. How best to assist with highway congestion reduction by encouraging the movement of freight by rail between the Port of Hampton Roads and the Inland Port at Front Royal; and

6. How to address the issue of insurance and risk management in connection with passenger rail operations and programs, including commuter rail.

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

The Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission shall complete its meetings by November 30, 2009, and the Chairman shall submit to the Division of Legislative Automated Systems an executive summary of its findings and recommendations no later than the first day of the 2010 Regular Session of the General Assembly. The executive summary shall state whether the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission intends to submit to the General Assembly and the Governor a report of its findings and recommendations for publication as a House or Senate document. The executive summary and report shall be submitted as provided in the procedures of the Division of Legislative Automated Systems for the processing of legislative documents and reports and shall be posted on the General Assembly's website.

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