

Department of Planning and Budget 2009 Fiscal Impact Statement

1. Bill Number: HB2577

House of Origin ☐ Introduced ☒ Substitute ☐ Engrossed
Second House ☐ In Committee ☐ Substitute ☐ Enrolled

2. Patron: May

3. Committee: House Transportation

4. Title: Noise abatement practices and technologies.

5. Summary: The proposed legislation would direct that the Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB) or the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT), in planning for or undertaking any highway construction or improvement project which includes the requirement for the mitigation of traffic noise impacts, give consideration to the use of noise reducing design and low-noise pavement design and techniques and landscaping screening in lieu of construction of noise walls or sound barriers constructed of concrete, metal, wood, bricks, stone, or composite materials.

6. Fiscal Impact Estimates: Indeterminate. See Item 8.

7. Budget Amendment Necessary: None.

8. Fiscal Implications: According to VDOT, the noise abatement alternatives noted by the proposed legislation typically cost more than standard solutions currently employed by the agency. The cost of a vegetative buffer is estimated to be four times more expensive than a structural noise barrier due to right-of-way acquisition, planting, and on-going maintenance costs. The estimated cost of low-noise pavement cannot be determined at this time, although the agency estimates it typically costs more than standard asphalt or concrete mixes.

The bill only requires that consideration be given to the alternate noise mitigation methods. To the extent they are used, VDOT may require additional funding for activities such as acquiring additional right-of-way, installing and caring for the vegetation, and installing the appropriate pavement. The costs for these expenses cannot be determined at this time.

9. Specific Agency or Political Subdivisions Affected: Department of Transportation

10. Technical Amendment Necessary: None.

11. Other Comments: None.

Date: 2/6/2009 dpb/smc

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cc: Secretary of Transportation