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HOUSE BILL NO. 1275

Offered January 20, 2010

A BILL to amend the Code of Virginia by adding in Chapter 10.1 of Title 33.1 a section numbered 33.1-391.5:1, relating to Virginia High-Speed Rail Commission.

Patrons—Cosgrove, Knight and Villanueva

Referred to Committee on Transportation

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:

1. That the Code of Virginia is amended by adding in Chapter 10.1 of Title 33.1 a section numbered 33.1-391.5:1 as follows:

§ 33.1-391.5:1. Virginia High-Speed Rail Commission.

There is hereby established the Virginia High-Speed Rail Commission, to consist of nine members appointed by the Governor for terms of four years and two ex-officio members. Seven of the nine appointed members shall be members of the General Assembly: four members of the House of Delegates and three members of the Senate. The remaining two members shall be appointed by the Governor: one from the membership of the Commonwealth Transportation Board and one from the membership of the Rail Advisory Board. Vacancies shall be filled for the unexpired term in the same manner as the original appointment. The members of the Commission shall annually elect one of its members as Chairman and may, by majority vote, annually elect one of its members as Vice-Chairman.

The Commission shall meet at least twice each year and shall issue a report of its activities each year.

The Commission may use for its operation and expenses, funds appropriated to it therefor by the General Assembly or allocated to it by the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation or received from federal sources. Members of the Commission shall receive compensation and reimbursement for their necessary and actual expenses as provided in the General Appropriations Act. Primary staff support to the Commission shall be provided by the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation.

The Commission shall provide information and recommendations to the General Assembly's Committees on Transportation at such times and intervals as may be mutually agreed to and arranged by the Commission. As may be deemed appropriate, the Commission may, in addition, provide information and recommendations to the Commonwealth Transportation Board.

The Commission shall:

1. Study, assess, develop, and promote effective and competitive plans for the design, construction, financing, and operation of high-speed rail and intercity passenger rail service in the Commonwealth, interstate high-speed rail service through and between points in the Commonwealth of Virginia and the State of North Carolina and adjacent states;

2. Assess, advise, and assist Commonwealth efforts to coordinate federal, state, and regional planning that will best establish high-speed rail service in and through Virginia;

3. Coordinate with counterparts in North Carolina and other states on the Southeast High-Speed Rail (SEHSR) corridor and, in turn, assess and advise on matters that will insure compatible long-term criteria are adopted and that optimum train scheduling is obtained to best provide high-speed rail service to all applicable regions in Virginia, including through-service passenger train options;

4. Assess, advise, and assist Commonwealth efforts to maximize federal funding in support of the establishment of high-speed interstate rail service for Richmond, Hampton Roads, and Petersburg as elements of the SEHSR corridor and for Hampton Roads on the federally designated extension to the SEHSR corridor; and

5. Monitor, assist, and learn from the state's Metropolitan Planning Organizations that are involved in passenger rail matters and from other relevant rail entities in Virginia, including but not limited to the state Rail Advisory Board, the Virginians for High-Speed Rail organizations, the Virginia Rail Policy Institute, and the Virginia Association of Rail Patrons organization.

INTRODUCED

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