

## SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 297

*Requesting the Department of Rail and Public Transportation to study transit-related issues in the Commonwealth. Report.*

Agreed to by the Senate, February 2, 2011

Agreed to by the House of Delegates, February 22, 2011

WHEREAS, the mission of the Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DRPT) is to improve the mobility of goods and people while expanding transportation choices in the Commonwealth; and WHEREAS, in the last six years alone, DRPT has started six new transit systems in 16 communities; and

WHEREAS, DRPT has also been instrumental in implementing some of the largest transit projects in decades including the Dulles Corridor Metrorail Project and the Norfolk Light Rail Project (the Tide), as well as numerous bus service expansions; and

WHEREAS, the economic downturn and increasing demand for services has caused a reduction in operating and capital grants; and

WHEREAS, historically the transit operating expenses match has been 20 percent; it has now been reduced to 15 percent and the new transit systems and the large projects beginning in 2011 (Norfolk Tide) and 2013 (Dulles Rail phase1) will push down that ratio even more; and

WHEREAS, the capital program changes year to year based upon the revenues available and the capital needs of the transit system; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the Senate, the House of Delegates concurring, That the Department of Rail and Public Transportation be directed to study transit-related issues in the Commonwealth.

In conducting its study, the Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DRPT) shall study, but not be limited to, the following issues:

1. Performance. The study should determine if there should be a system in place to reward operator performance based upon specific performance criteria (e.g., farebox recovery, cost per passenger trip, passenger trips per vehicle revenue hour, etc.);

2. Prioritization - currently all capital requests are matched equally. The study should examine different funding categories;

3. Stability - match ratios change every year based upon demand and available revenues. The study should examine holding systems harmless at existing levels and creating a reserve to stabilize funding for both capital and operating expenses; and

4. Allocation - current funding formulas were established in the Code of Virginia about 25 years ago at a time when transit was not as important as today in the overall transportation network. The study should evaluate the allocation of the 14.7 percent of Transportation Trust Fund revenues among capital and operating expenses and special programs. The study should also address the current Code language that allows transit funding up to 95 percent of eligible capital and operating expenses. The study should determine an appropriate percentage.

This study is to be conducted by DRPT in cooperation with transit stakeholders, transit systems, local governments, and metropolitan planning organizations as well as other interested parties. The study shall be conducted by DRPT using existing agency staff and resources and be completed for the 2012 Regular Session of the General Assembly. All agencies of the Commonwealth shall provide assistance to DRPT for this study, upon request.

The Department of Rail and Public Transportation shall complete its meetings by November 30, 2011, and shall submit to the Governor and the General Assembly an executive summary and 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 no later than the first day of the 2012 Regular Session of the General Assembly and shall be posted on the General Assembly's website.