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HOUSE BILL NO. 1828

Offered January 9, 2013

Prefiled January 8, 2013

A BILL to amend and reenact §§ 33.1-391.4 and 33.1-391.5 of the Code of Virginia, relating to the purchase of railway lines by the Department of Rail and Public Transportation.

Patron—Villanueva

Referred to Committee on Transportation

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:

1. That §§ 33.1-391.4 and 33.1-391.5 of the Code of Virginia are amended and reenacted as follows:

§ 33.1-391.4. General powers of the Department.

The Department shall have the following general powers:

1. To accept grants from the United States government and agencies and instrumentalities thereof and any other source. To these ends, the Department shall have the power to comply with such conditions and execute such agreements as may be necessary, convenient or desirable;

2. To make and enter into all contracts and agreements necessary or incidental to the performance of its duties and the execution of its powers under this chapter, including but not limited to, contracts with the United States government, other states, agencies and governmental subdivisions of Virginia, and other appropriate public and private entities;

3. To assist other appropriate entities, public or private, in the implementation and improvement of passenger and freight rail, transportation demand management, ridesharing, and public transportation services and the retention of rail corridors for public purposes;

4. To represent and promote the Commonwealth's interests in passenger and freight rail, transportation demand management, ridesharing, and public transportation; and

5. To acquire and hold title to the land necessary to construct railway lines in order to reduce traffic congestion on highways and shift traffic to rail transportation. To acquire by any means whatsoever, lease, improve, and construct railway lines, passenger and freight rail, transportation demand management, ridesharing, and public transportation facilities, and passenger and freight rail, transportation demand management, ridesharing, and public transportation equipment determined to be for the common good of the Commonwealth or a region of the Commonwealth and to assist other appropriate entities in the implementation and improvement of passenger and freight rail, transportation demand management, ridesharing, and public transportation services and the retention of rail corridors for public purposes.

§ 33.1-391.5. Responsibilities of Department.

The Department shall have the following responsibilities:

1. Determine present and future needs for, and economic feasibility of providing, public transportation, transportation demand management, and ridesharing facilities and services and the retention, improvement, and addition of passenger and freight rail transportation in the Commonwealth;

2. Formulate and implement plans and programs for the establishment, improvement, development and coordination of public transportation, transportation demand management, and ridesharing facilities and services, and the development, retention, and improvement of passenger and freight rail transportation services and corridors in the Commonwealth, including lines for higher speed passenger rail that will shift traffic from the highways to passenger rail and thereby reduce traffic congestion, and coordinate transportation demand management and innovative technological transportation initiatives with the Department of Transportation;

3. Coordinate with the Department of Transportation in the conduct of research, policy analysis, and planning for the rail and public transportation modes as may be appropriate to alleviate traffic congestion on highways by shifting traffic to passenger rail and to ensure the provision of effective, safe, and efficient public transportation and passenger and freight rail services in the Commonwealth;

4. Develop uniform financial and operating data on and criteria for evaluating all public transportation activities in the Commonwealth, develop specific methodologies for the collection of such data by public transit operators, regularly and systematically verify such data by means of financial audits and periodic field reviews of operating data collection methodologies, and develop such other information as may be required to evaluate the performance and improve the economy or efficiency of public transit or passenger and freight rail operations, transportation demand management programs, and ridesharing in the Commonwealth;

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- 59 5. Compile and maintain an up-to-date inventory of all abandoned railroad corridors in the
60 Commonwealth abandoned after January 1, 1970;
- 61 6. Provide training and other technical support services to transportation operators and ridesharing
62 coordinators as may be appropriate to improve public transportation, ridesharing, and passenger and
63 freight rail services;
- 64 7. Maintain liaison with state, local, district and federal agencies or other entities, private and public,
65 having responsibilities for passenger and freight rail, transportation demand management, ridesharing,
66 and public transportation programs;
- 67 8. Receive, administer and allocate all planning, operating, capital, and any other grant programs
68 from the Federal Transit Administration, the Federal Railroad Administration, the Federal Highway
69 Administration, and other agencies of the United States government for public transportation, passenger
70 and freight rail transportation, transportation demand management, and ridesharing purposes with
71 approval of the Board and to comply with all conditions attendant thereto;
- 72 9. Administer all state grants for public transportation, rail transportation, ridesharing, and
73 transportation demand management purposes with approval of the Board;
- 74 10. Promote the use of public transportation, transportation demand management, ridesharing, and
75 passenger and freight rail services to improve the mobility of Virginia's citizens and the transportation of
76 goods;
- 77 11. Represent the Commonwealth on local, regional, and national agencies, industry associations,
78 committees, task forces, and other entities, public and private, having responsibility for passenger and
79 freight rail, transportation demand management, ridesharing, and public transportation;
- 80 12. Represent the Commonwealth's interests in passenger and freight rail, transportation demand
81 management, ridesharing, and public transportation and coordinate with the Department of
82 Transportation in the planning, location, design, construction, implementation, monitoring, evaluation,
83 purchase, and rehabilitation of facilities and services that affect or are used by passenger and freight rail,
84 transportation demand management, ridesharing, or public transportation;
- 85 13. Coordinate with the State Corporation Commission on all matters dealing with rail safety
86 inspections and rail regulations which fall within its purview;
- 87 14. Prepare and review state legislation and Commonwealth recommendations on federal legislation
88 and regulations as directed by the Secretary of Transportation;
- 89 15. Promote public transportation, ridesharing, and passenger and freight rail safety; and
- 90 16. Ensure the safety of rail fixed guideway transit systems within the Commonwealth and carry out
91 state safety and security oversight responsibilities for rail fixed guideway transit systems as required by
92 the Federal Transit Administration and federal law. For any rail fixed guideway transit system operated
93 within the Commonwealth pursuant to an interstate compact, the Department shall perform its oversight
94 responsibilities in accordance with the interstate compact governing the operation of such system and
95 any applicable federal law.