

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 248

Commending the Northern Virginia Transportation Commission.

Agreed to by the House of Delegates, February 7, 2014

Agreed to by the Senate, February 13, 2014

WHEREAS, the Northern Virginia Transportation Commission, created by the General Assembly of Virginia in 1964, will celebrate its 50th anniversary on September 1, 2014; and

WHEREAS, the Northern Virginia Transportation Commission (NVTC) began with an initial district of five jurisdictions, including the Counties of Arlington and Fairfax and the Cities of Alexandria, Fairfax, and Falls Church, with 11 elected officials from those jurisdictions and the chair of the State Highway Commission serving jointly as commissioners; and

WHEREAS, the NVTC has grown to include the County of Loudoun and now has 20 board members, including six members of the General Assembly of Virginia and a designee of the Virginia Secretary of Transportation; and

WHEREAS, the NVTC district has a current population of more than 1.7 million people in a territory covering 1,000 square miles; and

WHEREAS, the NVTC serves the citizens of the Commonwealth by promoting and funding an innovative network of public transit and ride sharing that provides 550,000 commuter trips each work day and 164 million passenger trips on bus and rail in NVTC's jurisdictions annually; and

WHEREAS, NVTC manages financial resources from federal, state, regional, and local partners exceeding \$200 million annually, while demonstrating sound fiscal management of public funds and establishing a set of stringent internal controls to manage NVTC's complex financial role in the region, resulting in unblemished independent audits; and

WHEREAS, the NVTC consistently promotes transit innovations leading to improved efficiency and customer service, including the highly successful Shirley Highway busway demonstration in the early 1970s, in which the NVTC purchased 90 new buses to double bus service in the corridor and generated more than 13,000 new daily transit trips; and

WHEREAS, expanded service and effectiveness have led to a 22 percent increase in ridership over the last decade; and

WHEREAS, the NVTC worked to create the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA), and the resulting interstate compact requires WMATA's Virginia board members to be appointed from among the NVTC's commissioners; and

WHEREAS, the NVTC began to plan for commuter rail service at its first business meeting in 1964 and persevered until the Virginia Railway Express (VRE) began operations in 1992; and

WHEREAS, the NVTC co-owns VRE, which is the tenth-largest commuter rail system in the United States, with annual ridership of over four million and assets of \$377 million; and

WHEREAS, the NVTC was selected in 1996 by the American Public Transportation Association as the outstanding government agency in North America; and

WHEREAS, today, five of the NVTC's six local jurisdictions operate successful local bus systems using SmarTrip fare collection systems coordinated by the NVTC, and in 2014, NVTC will manage a technical procurement that will join all NVTC jurisdictions and the Virginia Rail Express and Potomac and Rappahannock Transportation Commission services on a single electronic payment system with the rest of the metropolitan region; and

WHEREAS, the NVTC uses its legal, policy, and technical expertise to support sustainable transit funding and to maximize the use of existing infrastructure through bus on shoulder, bus service express lanes, and commuter bus storage solutions; and

WHEREAS, the NVTC has planned for coordinated emergency responses by Northern Virginia's transit systems to facilitate faster transit reactions and better communication with customers, police, fire departments, and other public safety personnel during emergencies; and

WHEREAS, the NVTC fosters innovation and adoption to increase effective and efficient transit in the Commonwealth through establishment of electronic schedules, real-time bus information technology, and telework; and

WHEREAS, the NVTC also compiles and reports detailed transit performance information that generates millions of dollars of federal financial assistance for the entire region each year; and

WHEREAS, several well-known officials have chaired the NVTC throughout the past 50 years, including members of the United States Congress such as Thomas M. Davis III, James P. Moran, and Gerald E. Connolly; a Virginia Secretary of Transportation, John G. Milliken; and many state senators and delegates who championed public transit causes together with local board and council members; and

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WHEREAS, in 50 years of leadership in transit system development, expansion, funding, and research, each of the current and former board members and staff have played an integral role in securing the transit network required to build and sustain the regional economy; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the General Assembly hereby commend the Northern Virginia Transportation Commission on the occasion of its 50th anniversary; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates prepare copies of this resolution for presentation to Paul Smedberg, chairman, and Kelley Coyner, executive director, of the Northern Virginia Transportation Commission as an expression of the General Assembly's congratulations on reaching this landmark in the Commission's history and appreciation for the leadership of the Commission in promoting ridesharing in Northern Virginia to the benefit of the region and the entire Commonwealth of Virginia.