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HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 77

Offered January 13, 2016

Prefiled January 7, 2016

Requesting the Commonwealth Transportation Board to study the feasibility of reducing or eliminating tolls on the Midtown and Downtown Tunnels in Hampton Roads. Report.

Patron—James (By Request)

Referred to Committee on Rules

WHEREAS, the toll facilities at the Midtown and Downtown Tunnels in Hampton Roads are operated by Elizabeth River Crossings, a private corporation that holds a concession to operate and maintain the tunnels for a period of 58 years; and

WHEREAS, toll rates are highest during peak hours, which puts a strain on the workforce and negatively affects commuters and businesses; and

WHEREAS, traffic volume in the Midtown and Downtown Tunnels has decreased significantly since the imposition of the tolls and has led to a decrease in sales tax collections in the City of Portsmouth; and

WHEREAS, the tolls place a financial burden on the area, hinder economic development, and limit regional mobility; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the Commonwealth Transportation Board be requested to study the feasibility of reducing or eliminating tolls on the Midtown and Downtown Tunnels in Hampton Roads.

In conducting its study, the Commonwealth Transportation Board shall investigate alternatives to reduce or eliminate tolls, including whether the maintenance and toll enforcement on the Midtown and Downtown Tunnels may be assumed by the Commonwealth, whether the Commonwealth is able to reallocate existing funding to reduce or eliminate the tolls, whether the contract with Elizabeth River Crossings can be renegotiated, or any other financial or legal avenue that would allow for a reduction or elimination of tolls.

All agencies of the Commonwealth shall provide assistance to the Commonwealth Transportation Board for this study, upon request.

The Commonwealth Transportation Board shall complete its meetings by November 30, 2016, 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 2017 Regular Session of the General Assembly and shall be posted on the General Assembly's website.

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