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HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 671

Offered January 9, 2019

Prefiled January 8, 2019

Requesting the Department of Rail and Public Transportation to study and develop best practices for lowering the cost of commuter and light rail projects. Report.

Patrons—Roem, Carter, Delaney, Hope, Keam, Kory, Levine, Plum, Rasoul, Reid and Simon

Referred to Committee on Rules

WHEREAS, building and widening roads is not sufficient to meet the transportation needs of the Commonwealth, and passenger rail systems are a necessary part of the solution to improve mobility and help the economy grow; and

WHEREAS, the Virginia Railway Express in Northern Virginia provides critical person-carrying capacity that is the equivalent of a full interstate lane in the peak-hour traffic direction in the Interstate 95 and Interstate 66 corridors, with less pollution, energy consumption, and accident cost than highway operations; and

WHEREAS, ridership on Virginia's Amtrak trains has grown nearly 70 percent since 2006, and intercity Amtrak trains annually remove over 250 million passenger miles from the Commonwealth's roadways; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Rail and Public Transportation is conducting major initiatives to increase transportation options across the Commonwealth; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Rail and Public Transportation, through the Intercity Passenger Rail Operating and Capital Fund, supports the operation of four Amtrak Northeast Regional train routes that feed into Amtrak's Northeast Corridor between Washington, D.C., and Boston and large capital projects that benefit the Commonwealth's intercity passenger rail service now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the Department of Rail and Public Transportation be requested to study and develop best practices for lowering the cost of commuter and light rail projects.

In conducting its study, the Department of Rail and Public Transportation shall (i) require all agencies and organizations receiving funds from the Department for commuter and light rail projects to conduct reviews of their cost estimates to ensure that they are at peak efficiency, (ii) study best practices developed by other states and countries for lowering the cost of commuter and light rail projects, and (iii) determine what improvements are feasible for implementation in the Commonwealth.

All agencies of the Commonwealth shall provide assistance to the Department of Rail and Public Transportation for this study, upon request.

The Department of Rail and Public Transportation shall complete its meetings by November 30, 2019, 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 2020 Regular Session of the General Assembly and shall be posted on the General Assembly's website.

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