

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 160

Establishing a Commission on the Future of Transportation in Virginia.

Agreed to by the House of Delegates, March 7, 1996

Agreed to by the Senate, March 7, 1996

WHEREAS, it has long been the goal of the General Assembly that transportation needs be assessed objectively and scientifically, both for the present and into the future; and

WHEREAS, it is a similarly well-established policy that prudent provision be made well in advance for funding these needs; and

WHEREAS, because of their substantial impact, both on transportation system users and on the financial mechanisms established to meet transportation system construction requirements, it is essential to foresee the need for and provide means to finance the construction and maintenance for all modes of transportation, particularly the financing of large-scale transportation construction projects; and

WHEREAS, funding such large-scale construction projects through the existing resource allocation structures and mechanisms could result in funding inequities and systemic inequality; and

WHEREAS, it is thus desirable that needs for such major transportation construction be identified as early as possible and that careful consideration be given to the desirability and feasibility of providing a specialized financing mechanism to ensure adequate revenues to cover the large costs of these major projects; and

WHEREAS, the improvement of the state's transportation infrastructure is dependent upon identifying additional sources of revenue and strengthening jurisdictional and agency cooperation; and

WHEREAS, new funding authorities and mechanisms, such as state and regional bonds, lines of credit, public-private partnerships, and private facilities, have made significant transportation improvements possible in the last decade and provide models to develop additional nontraditional funding mechanisms; and

WHEREAS, public transportation is an essential element of the transportation system; and

WHEREAS, federal policies contained in the federal Clean Air Act Amendments of 1990, the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991, and energy policies require an expanded role for public transportation; and

WHEREAS, Congress is planning to eliminate federal operating funds for public transportation over the next several years, placing increased stress on state and local funding for public transportation and resulting in the possibility of increases in passenger fares; and

WHEREAS, reduced funding for public transportation could result in service reductions, which would deprive citizens of basic and essential mobility; and

WHEREAS, local government support for public transportation in Virginia currently is drawn from general funds in local treasuries, placing the responsibility for local support of public transportation primarily upon homeowners and other property taxpayers; and

WHEREAS, public transportation should be studied on a regional basis with a view to determine whether regional transportation district commissions should be created in certain areas of the Commonwealth; and

WHEREAS, it is essential that Virginia have a comprehensive transportation system with excellent highways, rail, public transportation, airports, and ports; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the Commission on the Future of Transportation in Virginia be established. The Commission shall be composed of 25 members to be appointed as follows: the Speaker of the House of Delegates; 2 members of the House Committee on Appropriations, 2 members of the House Committee on Finance, 2 members of the House Committee on Transportation, and 4 citizens of the Commonwealth, to be appointed by the Speaker of the House of Delegates; the President pro tempore of the Senate; 2 members of the Senate Committee on Finance as designated by the Co-Chairmen of the Senate Committee on Finance, 2 members of the Senate Committee on Transportation, and 4 citizens of the Commonwealth, to be appointed by the Senate Committee on Privileges and Elections. The Secretary of Transportation, the Commissioner of the Department of Transportation, the Director of the Department of Rail and Public Transportation, the Director of the Department of Aviation, and the Executive Director of the Virginia Port Authority shall serve as ex officio, nonvoting members. The Commission may also appoint a citizen advisory committee, which shall include local elected officials and shall serve without compensation, to assist the Commission in its work.

The Commission shall (i) review and update the findings of the Commission on Transportation for the Twenty-First Century, and the efforts of the Select Committee Studying the Transportation Trust

Fund under Senate Joint Resolution No. 240 (1993) and Senate Joint Resolution No. 143 (1994), (ii) identify those major transportation system construction projects whose construction will be required over the next 25 years and the needs of public transportation, (iii) determine the amount of additional transportation revenue to be required over that period to cover these costs, (iv) propose appropriate means of raising and allocating such needed revenues while determining sources of reliable, dedicated funding for public and other modes of transportation, and (v) study existing transportation agencies and authorities and the need to create, restructure, and combine agencies and authorities for Virginia.

The direct costs of this study shall not exceed \$26,000.

The staffs of the House Committee on Appropriations, the Senate Committee on Finance, and the Division of Legislative Services shall provide support for the study. The Secretary of Transportation, with the assistance of agencies under his direction, shall provide such technical assistance as the Commission may require. All agencies of the Commonwealth are requested to provide assistance to the Commission, upon request.

The Commission shall complete its work in time to report its findings and recommendations by July 1, 1997, and to the Governor and the 1998 Session of the General Assembly as provided in the procedures of the Division of Legislative Automated Systems for the processing of legislative documents.

Implementation of this resolution is subject to subsequent approval and certification by the Joint Rules Committee. The Committee may withhold expenditures or delay the period for the conduct of the study.