

## HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 252

*Establishing the High-Speed Rail System Commission.*

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

Agreed to by the Senate, March 6, 1996

WHEREAS, there have been studies conducted by the General Assembly on various aspects of the high-speed rail service between Richmond and Washington, D.C.; and

WHEREAS, other parts of the Commonwealth want to determine the usefulness of high-speed rail service in their locations; and

WHEREAS, the benefits of a national intermodal transportation system are enormous, offering the promise of (i) lowering overall costs by allowing each mode to be used for the portion of the trip for which it is best suited; (ii) increasing economic productivity and efficiency, thereby enhancing the nation's global competitiveness; (iii) reducing the congestion and burden on overstressed infrastructure investments; (iv) improving mobility for elderly, disabled, isolated, and economically disadvantaged persons; (v) generating higher returns from public and private infrastructure investments; and (vi) reducing energy consumption and contributing to improved air quality and environmental conditions; and

WHEREAS, high-speed rail service will be a critical component of the Commonwealth's system of intermodal transportation; and

WHEREAS, there is currently a mix of private and public entities involved in the financing, management and maintenance of Virginia's rail system; and

WHEREAS, coordinated planning and evaluation will contribute to the most efficient and effective use of Virginia's transportation resources; and

WHEREAS, increased rail ridership offers the opportunity for communities with rail stations to expand pleasant, economically viable residential or commercial facilities near those stations, resulting in environmental benefits to the affected communities; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the High-Speed Rail System Commission be established. The Commission shall make recommendations necessary to assure the presence of a high-speed rail system in Virginia, including an overall plan and financing alternatives.

During its deliberations the Commission shall address the following questions:

1. Where in the Commonwealth will high-speed rail service be most effective and efficient, given the goals of an intermodal system?
2. What are the roles of the various private and public entities now involved in the planning and delivery of high-speed rail service?
3. What timetable should be used for the development of the high-speed rail system?
4. How should system construction and expansion be financed?

The Commission shall consider other aspects of the creation of a high-speed rail system for the Commonwealth as they find necessary.

The Commission will build on preliminary work done by the Department of Rail and Public Transportation and several private studies.

The Commission shall consist of 16 members appointed as follows: the Chairman of the House Committee on Finance; the Chairman of the House Committee on Transportation; 2 members of the House of Delegates to be appointed by the Speaker of the House of Delegates; the Chairman of the Senate Committee on Transportation; 1 member of the Senate as recommended by the Co-chairmen of the Senate Committee on Finance and 1 member of the Senate to be appointed by the Senate Committee on Privileges and Elections; 1 member of the Board of Transportation Safety, 1 representative of the Virginia Railway Express, and 1 citizen of the Commonwealth to be appointed by the Speaker of the House of Delegates; 1 representative of commercial rail lines and 1 citizen of the Commonwealth to be appointed by the Senate Committee on Privileges and Elections; the Lieutenant Governor; the Secretary of Commerce and Trade; the Secretary of Transportation; and the Director of the Department of Rail and Public Transportation. The chairman of the Commission shall be a state elected official serving on the Commission.

The Commission shall be staffed by the Division of Legislative Services, assisted by the staffs of the House Committee on Appropriations and the Senate Committee on Finance.

The direct costs of this study shall not exceed \$6,750.

The Commission shall complete its work in time to submit its findings and recommendations to the Governor and the 1997 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.