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SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 361

Offered January 20, 1997

Expressing the sense of the General Assembly in favor of continued cooperation by the Department of Rail and Public Transportation with other states in furtherance of high-speed rail service.

Patrons—Reasor, Waddell and Wampler; Delegates: Abbitt, Cranwell, Robinson and Van Landingham

Referred to the Committee on Rules

WHEREAS, studies undertaken by the Commonwealth of Virginia and others indicate that there is a potential for high-speed rail service in certain corridors; and

WHEREAS, the need to improve the national transportation infrastructure is growing faster than are the funding resources available to the states; and

WHEREAS, the effectiveness of the transportation system is dependent on providing viable transportation alternatives for shippers and travelers; and

WHEREAS, the continued economic development of and quality of life in the states are directly dependent on a balanced, smoothly operating, multimodal transportation system; and

WHEREAS, the land and financing necessary to meet the accelerating need for new highways and airports are in increasingly short supply; and

WHEREAS, increased use of railroads not only promotes economic development but also reduces transportation's impact on the environment and the consumption of energy; and

WHEREAS, a comprehensive network of privately owned rail corridors exists that could be improved with public investment in order to carry significant numbers of passengers between metropolitan areas and to increase its capacity to carry freight; and

WHEREAS, the State of North Carolina and the Commonwealth of Virginia are jointly conducting a Master Plan to judge the engineering feasibility, determine the cost, and select the alignments for the Section 1010 High-Speed Rail Corridor designated to run between Charlotte, Raleigh, Richmond, and Washington; and

WHEREAS, the federal High Speed Ground Transportation Feasibility Study undertaken recommends linking the Section 1010 corridors in Virginia to Washington D. C, Maryland, and the Northeast Corridor; and

WHEREAS, the States of Georgia, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Florida have agreed to plan together for the expansion of conventional rail service between their respective states as an incremental first step toward future high-speed rail passenger service; and

WHEREAS, the State of Tennessee has established a High Speed Rail Commission; and

WHEREAS, Amtrak has included the corridor from Richmond to Newport News as part of their Northeast Corridor system; and

WHEREAS, the Federal Railroad Administration has provided the Commonwealth additional funding for high-speed studies; and

WHEREAS, the Commonwealth Transportation Board has programmed funding for the first phases of improvement to the Richmond-DC corridor to reduce travel times; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the Senate, the House of Delegates concurring, That it is the sense of the General Assembly that the Department of Rail and Public Transportation continue to work cooperatively with the State of Maryland, the State of North Carolina, the State of Tennessee, and other Southeastern states to identify the appropriate corridors for high-speed rail service and to implement such service where feasible and cost effective for the benefit of the traveling public; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the Senate transmit a copy of this resolution to the Director of the Department of Rail and Public Transportation on order that he may be apprised of the sense of the General Assembly in this matter.

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