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HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 282

Offered January 26, 1998

Establishing a joint subcommittee to study the impact of tolls charged by the Richmond Metropolitan Authority for the use of the Downtown Expressway, Powhite Parkway, and Boulevard Bridge.

Patrons—Ware, Cantor, Cox, Ingram, Nixon, Reid and Rhodes; Senators: Martin and Watkins

Referred to Committee on Rules

WHEREAS, creation of the Richmond Metropolitan Authority (RMA) was authorized in 1966 by the General Assembly; and

WHEREAS, a central purpose of the creating RMA was the stimulation of economic activity and improvement of the quality of life in the Richmond metropolitan area through the construction and operation of highways, bridges, and other transportation facilities; and

WHEREAS, it was anticipated that highway construction and operation costs would be supported, largely, through payment of tolls by highway users; and

WHEREAS, RMA proceeded to construct the Downtown Expressway and the Powhite Parkway, two toll facilities linking downtown Richmond with suburban communities; and

WHEREAS, RMA later acquired the Boulevard Bridge in the City of Richmond and operates it as a toll facility as well; and

WHEREAS, many of the benefits expected to flow from creation of RMA have failed to materialize, as declining toll road use and rising tolls begin a vicious circle that threatens potentially damaging consequences for Greater Richmond's economic health and air quality; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That a joint subcommittee be established to study the impact of tolls charged for the use of the Downtown Expressway, Powhite Parkway, and Boulevard Bridge. The joint subcommittee shall be composed of nine members as follows: five members of the House of Delegates, to be appointed by the Speaker of the House, and four members of the Senate, to be appointed by the Senate Committee on Privileges and Elections.

In conducting its study, the joint subcommittee shall consider the impact that tolls charged by the Richmond Metropolitan Authority for use of the Downtown Expressway, Powhite Parkway, and Boulevard Bridge are having on the economy of Greater Richmond, and the possible degradation of regional air quality resulting from the public's preference for using toll-free alternatives to these facilities, even though doing so may increase congestion and, thus, increase air pollution from motor vehicle exhausts and other emissions. Based upon its findings, the joint subcommittee shall make such legislative and other recommendations as it deems necessary and proper.

The direct costs of this study shall not exceed \$ 9,450.

The joint subcommittee shall complete its work in time to submit its findings and recommendations to the Governor and the 1999 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.

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