

VIRGINIA ACTS OF ASSEMBLY -- 2018 SESSION

CHAPTER 743

An Act to direct the Commonwealth Transportation Board to study financing options for Interstate 81 corridor improvements; report.

[S 971]

Approved April 4, 2018

Whereas, an adequate, efficient, and safe Interstate 81 corridor is important to the economic well-being of the communities located along the corridor; and

Whereas, Interstate 81 carries 42 percent of all the truck vehicle miles traveled on interstate highways in the Commonwealth and, in 2016, there were more than 2,000 crashes on Interstate 81 and, of such crashes, 30 took more than six hours to clear; and

Whereas, Interstate 81 is a crucial corridor for interstate truck traffic and an efficient artery to promote the flow of goods and continued economic development; and

Whereas, losing one lane of traffic due to a crash reduces the highway capacity by 65 percent; and

Whereas, the lack of parallel routes and automated traffic management systems increases the impact of such crashes on users of Interstate 81; and

Whereas, due to these conditions, the Interstate 81 corridor today does not meet the needs of these communities, and current statewide transportation revenues are not sufficient to implement necessary improvements to the Interstate 81 corridor; now, therefore,

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:

1. § 1. That the Commonwealth Transportation Board (the Board) be directed to study financing options for Interstate 81 corridor improvements.

In conducting its study, the Board shall evaluate the feasibility of using toll financing to improve Interstate 81 throughout the Commonwealth. Such evaluation shall not consider options that toll all users of Interstate 81, and shall not consider tolls on commuters using Interstate 81, but may consider high-occupancy toll lanes established pursuant to § 33.2-502 of the Code of Virginia and tolls on heavy commercial vehicles. The Board, with the support of the Office of Intermodal Planning and Investment, shall develop and adopt an Interstate 81 Corridor Improvement Plan (Plan). Such Plan shall include the examination of the entire length of Interstate 81 and the methods of financing such improvements, and such Plan may include tolls imposed or collected on heavy commercial vehicles but shall not include tolls on commuters using Interstate 81.

At a minimum, in the development of such Plan, the Board shall:

- 1. Designate specific segments of the Interstate 81 corridor for improvement;*
- 2. Identify a targeted set of improvements for each segment that may be financed or funded in such segment and evaluated using the statewide prioritization process pursuant to § 33.2-214.1 of the Code of Virginia;*
- 3. Ensure that in the overall plan of expenditure and distribution of any toll revenues or other financing means evaluated, each segment's total long-term benefit shall be approximately equal to the proportion of the total of the toll revenues collected that are attributable to such segment divided by the total of such toll revenues collected;*
- 4. Study truck travel patterns along the Interstate 81 corridor and analyze policies that minimize the impact on local truck traffic;*
- 5. Identify incident management strategies corridor-wide;*
- 6. Ensure that any revenues collected on Interstate 81 be used only for the benefit of that corridor;*
- 7. Identify actions and policies that will be implemented to minimize the diversion of truck traffic from the Interstate 81 corridor, including the prohibition of through trucks on parallel routes;*
- 8. Determine potential solutions to address truck parking needs along the Interstate 81 corridor; and*
- 9. Assess the potential economic impacts on Virginia agriculture, manufacturing, and logistics sector companies utilizing the I-81 corridor from tolling only heavy commercial trucks.*

Technical assistance shall be provided to the Commonwealth Transportation Board by the Department of Transportation, the Department of Motor Vehicles, and the Department of State Police. All agencies of the Commonwealth shall provide assistance to the Commonwealth Transportation Board for this study, upon request.

The Commonwealth Transportation Board shall complete its meetings by November 30, 2018, 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 2019 Regular Session of the General Assembly and shall be posted on the General Assembly's website.

2. That nothing in this act shall be construed to conflict with the exclusive authority of the General Assembly to approve tolling on components of highways, bridges, or tunnels.