

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 59

Designating the Thursday before Memorial Day, in 2019 and in each succeeding year, as Celebrate Transportation Day in Virginia.

Agreed to by the House of Delegates, February 12, 2018

Agreed to by the Senate, March 5, 2018

WHEREAS, freedom of movement is essential to the American way of life, and Americans travel more than two trillion miles annually for business and pleasure; and

WHEREAS, most Americans rely on personal motor vehicles for travel, making accessible, well-maintained roads and highways a critical part of everyday life; vehicle travel on Virginia's highways increased by 13 percent between 2000 and 2016, and there were nearly six million licensed drivers in the Commonwealth in 2016; and

WHEREAS, ease of transportation is a significant factor for people deciding where to live and raise a family, where to start a business, or where to travel for leisure; enhancing transportation assets boosts the economy in both the short term and the long term by creating jobs, increasing economic competitiveness, and improving quality of life; and

WHEREAS, the history of transportation in the Commonwealth can be traced back to the Jamestown settlement, where the "roade along the River Banke" was used to transport supplies from ships to the Jamestown fort; and

WHEREAS, evidence of a "Greate Road" between Jamestown Island and Glasshouse Point can still be found in the area, and the first recorded bridge built in the Commonwealth was actually a 200-foot-long wharf at Jamestown; and

WHEREAS, enacted in 1632, Virginia's first road law permitted different governing bodies to make decisions about where roads would be located; in the mid-1600s, governing bodies began to work together to standardize the design, construction, and maintenance of roads; and

WHEREAS, in the early 1800s, the first road in Virginia with a paved surface, the Manchester Turnpike, was completed; the road ran from Manchester on the south bank of the James River to the Falling Creek coal mines in Chesterfield County, a distance of about 12 miles; and

WHEREAS, the 19th century saw the construction of several long-distance roads, including the 150-mile Kanawha Turnpike, the 234-mile Staunton and Parkersburg Turnpike, the 237-mile Northwestern Turnpike, and the 175-mile Southwestern Turnpike; and

WHEREAS, during the 19th century, the Commonwealth also made great enhancements to bridges and prioritized the construction of canals and canal roads as a major means of commercial transportation, until the advent of steam locomotives and railroads; and

WHEREAS, the first railways consisted of horse-drawn carts running on wooden or metal tracks; early steam locomotives arrived in Virginia between 1825 and 1830, and by the mid-1830s, several railroads were under construction and the locomotive was on its way to becoming the dominant form of commercial transportation; and

WHEREAS, a kerosene-fueled horseless carriage, demonstrated in Norfolk in 1899, was likely the first automobile driven in the Commonwealth; the use of automobiles grew slowly due to a lack of suitable roads, and it was more than a decade before the number of automobiles in Virginia reached 2,500; and

WHEREAS, in 1910, the first speed limits, 20 miles per hour in open country and eight miles per hour in cities, on curves, and at intersections, were established in the Commonwealth, along with the first licensing and registration requirements; and

WHEREAS, the first concrete road in Virginia, a small stretch in Prince Edward County between Farmville and Hampden-Sydney College, was constructed between September 1913 and January 1914; and

WHEREAS, the first state primary highway system, a network of 4,002 miles of roads, was established in 1918; today the Virginia Department of Transportation operates the third-largest highway system in the United States with 8,111 miles of state primary roads, 48,305 miles of secondary roads, and 333 miles of frontage roads; and

WHEREAS, in 1963, the first interstate highway opened in Virginia, Interstate 81; the Commonwealth now operates more than 1,000 miles of interstate highways connecting major cities with other states; and

WHEREAS, the Commonwealth continues to expand and improve its highways and roadways to reduce travel delays and transportation costs, increase safety and mobility, protect the environment, and stimulate sustained job growth, ensuring that Virginia remains a wonderful place to live, work, and visit;

now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the General Assembly designate the Thursday before Memorial Day, in 2019 and in each succeeding year, as Celebrate Transportation Day in Virginia; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates transmit a copy of this resolution to the Virginia Department of Transportation so that members of the agency may be apprised of the sense of the General Assembly of Virginia in this matter; and, be it

RESOLVED FINALLY, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates post the designation of this day on the General Assembly's website.