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SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 52

Offered January 10, 2018

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Recognizing the need for, and the Virginia Department of Transportation's prior approval of, four lanes of traffic on U.S. Route 220 through Botetourt and Alleghany Counties to connect Interstate 81 and Interstate 64.

 Patron—Deeds

 Referred to Committee on Rules

WHEREAS, the Alleghany Highlands, consisting of Alleghany County, the City of Covington, and the Towns of Iron Gate and Clifton Forge, have seen economic stagnation over the past 35 years; a stagnation that can perhaps be traced to a 1980 fire at the Hercules plant in Covington; and

WHEREAS, the Alleghany Highlands is characterized by particularly valuable assets: a workforce bound in a manufacturing and railroad tradition that requires dedication and hard work; rich natural resources, including the Jackson and Cowpasture Rivers and bountiful hardwood forests; and Interstate 64, which travels east to west in the central part of Alleghany County; and

WHEREAS, a four-lane highway providing a north/south connection from the Roanoke area would open up the Alleghany Highlands for business and economic growth, and opening up the travel lane between Interstate 81 and Covington would enhance the existing business at the WestRock paper mill, one of the largest mills of its kind in the world, as well as other existing businesses; and

WHEREAS, completion of the four-lane highway would shorten the trip between Interstate 81 and Interstate 64 and would enhance existing business, as well as shorten the travel time to the Alleghany Highlands and thus make the area more attractive for tourism and other business; and

WHEREAS, a four-lane highway was approved, planned, and partially built in the 1980s from Interstate 81 to Eagle Rock; the balance of the four lanes connecting the highway to Interstate 64 was to be built as promptly as funds were available, all as a part of former Governor Mills Godwin's vision for an "Arterial Highway System"; and

WHEREAS, the project was delayed for various reasons, mainly because of funding limitations; and

WHEREAS, although there is ongoing construction between Eagle Rock and the Town of Iron Gate to create a "super" two-lane road that will greatly improve U.S. 220 from a safety standpoint and will be a great benefit to Botetourt County and the Alleghany Highlands, such two-lane road is not a substitute for a four-lane highway; and

WHEREAS, there have been many accidents, with deaths and injuries, on U.S. 220 between Eagle Rock and Iron Gate; and

WHEREAS, there is a need for the General Assembly to recognize that a four-lane highway between Eagle Rock and Interstate 64 has previously been approved by the Virginia Department of Transportation, with most of the engineering completed and substantial right-of-way already acquired, so that, as funding becomes available, the four-lane highway may be completed; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the Senate, the House of Delegates concurring, That the General Assembly recognize the need for, and the Virginia Department of Transportation's prior approval of, four lanes of traffic on U.S. Route 220 through Botetourt and Alleghany Counties to connect Interstate 81 and Interstate 64; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the Senate transmit a copy of this resolution to the Commonwealth Transportation Board in order that the members of the Commonwealth Transportation Board may be apprised of the sense of the General Assembly of Virginia in this matter during their deliberations.

INTRODUCED

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