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SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 114

Offered January 22, 1996

Establishing a joint subcommittee to study funding for public transportation in the Roanoke Valley Region.

Patrons—Edwards and Trumbo

Referred to the Committee on Rules

WHEREAS, public transportation is an essential element of the transportation system of the Roanoke Valley region, providing mobility to commuters, shoppers, tourists, and many citizens who would otherwise be isolated from jobs, family members, retail stores, tourist destinations, medical treatment, and other facilities; and

WHEREAS, public transportation is vital to the physical well-being, safety, and quality of life of both older and disabled citizens in the Roanoke Valley region, many of whom would have no safe and reliable means of travel but for the existence of public transportation services operated by the City of Roanoke; and

WHEREAS, a reliable and efficient public transportation system is a crucial factor in attracting future economic development and preserving existing jobs in the Roanoke Valley region; and

WHEREAS, federal policies contained in the federal Clean Air Act Amendments of 1990, the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act, and energy policies require an expanded role for public transportation; and

WHEREAS, Congress is planning to eliminate federal operating funds for public transportation over the next several years, placing increased stress on state and local funding for public transportation and resulting in large increases in fares paid by passengers, many of whom live on fixed incomes; and

WHEREAS, reduced funding for public transportation has also resulted in service reductions, which deprive citizens of basic and essential mobility, and further reductions in federal and state financial assistance have raised the probability of further service cuts in the immediate future; and

WHEREAS, local governmental support for public transportation in the Roanoke Valley region currently is drawn from general funds in local treasuries, placing the responsibility for local support of public transportation primarily upon homeowners and other property taxpayers; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the Senate, the House of Delegates concurring, That a joint subcommittee be established to study funding for public transportation in the Roanoke Valley region.

The joint subcommittee shall consist of nine members to be appointed as follows: three members of the Senate, to be appointed by the Senate Committee on Privileges and Elections; four members of the House of Delegates, to be appointed by the Speaker of the House; and two members at large who are residents of the Roanoke Valley region, one to be appointed by the Speaker of the House and one to be appointed by the Senate Committee on Privileges and Elections.

In its deliberations, the joint subcommittee shall examine: (i) the current sources of local funding for public transportation; (ii) the scope of property tax relief which could be realized for homeowners and other property taxpayers in the Roanoke Valley region by identifying dedicated funding sources, other than local general funds, to support public transportation; and (iii) sources of stable and reliable dedicated funding for public transportation.

The Division of Legislative Services shall provide staff support for the study. Technical assistance shall be provided upon request of the joint subcommittee by the Department of Rail and Public Transportation. All agencies of the Commonwealth shall provide assistance to the joint subcommittee, upon request.

The joint subcommittee shall complete its work in time to submit its findings and recommendations to the Governor and the 1997 Session of the General Assembly as provided in the procedures of the Division of Legislative Automated Systems for processing legislative documents.

The direct costs of this study shall not exceed \$5,000.

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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