To: Chairman Milde and the VRE Operations Board  
From: Doug Allen  
Date: June 20, 2014  
Re: Legislative Update

**Virginia General Assembly Legislative Issues:**

**General Assembly Budget Update - as of June 9, 2014**

On June 8th, we had a major upheaval in the legislature. Senator Philip Puckett, a Democrat from Southwest Virginia has resigned, effective Monday, June 9, 2014. This flips control of the Senate back to the Republicans with a 20-19 split. Republicans will now be reorganizing committee chairs and membership and figuring out how to get a budget bill to the floor while excluding Marketplace Virginia. The balance of power on expansion and therefore passing a budget lies with three Senate Republicans- Hanger, Watkins and Stosch. The pressure is on for them to side with the Senate Republicans and move forward to decoupling the budget and Medicaid expansion, as Senator Hanger recommended last week. The general feeling is that we will see movement early next week and once there is a bill, the compromise will happen quickly. The legislature must have a budget by June 30th to be able to use rainy day funds to fill the projected $300 million dollar shortfall. If they don’t have a budget by then, the legislature will have to cut the budget by double that number in order to fill the hole and to make a deposit into the rainy day fund, as is statutorily required.

**Senate Budget Amendment: Project Development Funding – as of June 12, 2014**

A Senate budget amendment included $2M in project development funding to identify current and future VRE core capacity issues. VRE was planning to use the funds to develop projects, including scoping and preliminary engineering, to compete for Federal Transit Administration (FTA) core capacity funding. Unfortunately, House and the Senate budget conferees diverted all $30M in available TPOF funds toward the budget deficit that has now grown to approximately $1.5B.
Federal Legislative Update

Virginia Congressional Delegation Office Meetings

Mr. Allen and Mr. Jungwirth met with Senator Kaine and staff from D.C. Congresswoman Holmes Norton since the last Operations Board meeting. Topics of discussion have included the importance of and future plans for VRE, Federal Surface Transportation Reauthorization, our TIGER grant submittal with the DDOT and DRPT, Commuter Benefits Equity, Core Capacity improvements and Positive Train Control.

Selected Text from Important Press Releases from APTA:

SENATE APPROPRIATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE PASSES THUD APPROPRIATIONS BILL

6/3/2014

In a short markup on June 3, the Senate Committee on Appropriations Subcommittee on Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies (THUD), passed its version of the Fiscal Year (FY) 2015 THUD Appropriations Bill.

While the legislative text is not yet public, the Subcommittee’s summary of the bill provides several top-line appropriation amounts, a number of which are increases over the House THUD appropriations bill. In FY 2015, the Senate bill would continue transit formula grants at FY 2014 levels, totaling $8.595 billion – the same level as the House bill. The Senate would nearly double – at $36.5 million, including $3 million for TCRP – the amount provided for research and technical assistance programs, as compared to the House.

The Senate bill provides $2.163 billion for Capital Investment Grants (New Starts), compared to $1.691 billion in the House bill. The Senate bill also includes $550 million for TIGER Grants, with the House bill including $100 million.

Additionally, the Senate would restore the $200 million cut to Amtrak grants proposed by the House, and set Amtrak funding at $1.39 billion, the level provided in FY 2014. The Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority would continue to receive $150 million, as authorized under separate legislation.


EPW COMMITTEE PASSES HIGHWAY BILL & SENATE COMMERCE HOLDS HEARING ON MAP-21

5/16/2014
Monday evening, the bipartisan leadership of the Senate Environment and Public Works (EPW) Committee jointly released the draft text of the committee’s proposal for reauthorization of Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (MAP-21). The bill released by Senate Committee of Environment and Public Works Chairman Barbara Boxer (D-CA), EPW Ranking Member David Vitter (R-LA), EPW’s Transportation and Infrastructure Subcommittee Chairman Tom Carper (D-DE), and Subcommittee Ranking Member John Barrasso (R-WY) would authorize the nation’s Federal-aid highway programs for six years at current funding levels plus inflation. On Thursday morning, the EPW Committee marked-up the draft legislation in a short markup where the Committee adopted by unanimous consent a manager’s amendment and a limited number of individual amendments, before passing the entire package out of committee by voice vote.

This bill creates a $400 million per year program for Projects of National and Regional Significance (PNRS). The PNRS program is modeled after the popular TIGER program, but would be paid for with HTF revenues instead of General Fund appropriations as TIGER is currently funded. Eligible projects would be those currently authorized by the highway or public transportation titles, with a total cost greater than $350 million, although the bill does include a 20 percent cap on rail, transit, and other non-highway projects that can be funded under the newly structured program.

On June 4th the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation Subcommittee on Surface Transportation and Merchant Marine Infrastructure, Safety, and Security held a hearing titled: Surface Transportation Reauthorization: Examining the Safety and Effectiveness of our Transportation Systems.


**HOUSE PASSES FY 2015 TRANSPORTATION-HUD APPROPRIATIONS BILL**

6/10/2014

The House of Representatives finished floor debate and passed, by a vote of 229-192, the Fiscal Year (FY) 2015 Transportation, Housing and Urban Development and Related Agencies (THUD) Appropriations bill. The bill is nearly identical to the one passed last week by the House Committee on Appropriations.

As with the Committee’s bill, the final House THUD FY 2015 Appropriations bill funds the core Federal Transit Administration (FTA) formula programs at the MAP-21 FY 2014 authorized level of $8.595 billion, but also includes the Committee’s cuts to Amtrak, Research, TIGER Grants, Capital Investment Grants and FTA Administration, which are funded from the General Fund. A chart showing the appropriations levels in the House approved bill, Senate Appropriations Committee bill, Administration’s Budget Request, and FY 2014 appropriated levels, can be found at: