February 28, 2014

Senator Timothy Kaine
United States Senate
388 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Kaine:

Current federal legislation encourages commuters to drive to work, rather than use public transportation. This results in increased traffic congestion on our roads, a rise in our nation’s reliance on foreign fuel imports and more pollution.

This letter urges you to support passage of legislation to establish permanent parity between the parking and transit portions of the commuter benefit. Legislation to establish parity has been introduced in both the U.S. Senate (S.1116, the “Commuter Benefits Equity Act”) and the House of Representatives (H.R. 2288, the “Commuter Parity Act”). A parity provision could also be included in other tax related legislation such as a tax extenders bill.

As part of the American Taxpayer Relief Act of 2012, Congress enacted a provision to increase the transit portion of the commuter benefit to $240 per month. A subsequent IRS cost-of-living adjustment raised the limit to $245 per month. This important legislation re-established parity between the parking and transit benefits to provide commuters who choose public transportation the same tax savings as those who drive to work. However, that increase was only temporary and expired December 31, 2013. Now, in 2014, the transit benefit sits at a max level of only $130 while parking was increased to $250 per month.

In the coming weeks, Congress will have the opportunity to take action to re-establish parity in the parking and transit portions of the commuter benefit as it considers important tax-related legislation. As you work to address many of the important issues that face our nation, we urge you to support the more than 2.7 million commuting Americans that rely on the transit commuter benefit and work to pass legislation that will ensure transit riders enjoy the same benefit as automobile users for their commutes to work.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Paul Milde
Chairman, Virginia Railway Express