Agenda Item 10-C
Information Item

To: Chairman Skinner and the VRE Operations Board
From: Doug Allen
Date: February 19, 2016
Re: Legislative Update

VRE LEGISLATIVE AGENDA ITEMS:

Protective Floor for the Regional 2.1% Motor Fuels Tax

SB 742 (Chief Patron Wagner)

We continue to advocate for adding a floor to the regional gas tax so VRE’s member jurisdictions receive stable transportation revenues. We are working with a broad coalition of groups who are advocating for the floor, including, VTA, NVTC, PRTC, Northern Virginia Chamber of Commerce, HRTAC, the Northern Virginia Transportation Alliance, and others.

All Senate fuel tax floor/increase bills are now consolidated in Senator Wagner’s SB 742 in the form of a substitute that was adopted in the Senate Finance Transportation Committee. SB 742 contains a fuels tax floor and increases the tax from 2.1% to 3% for NVTC and PRTC. The Senate Finance Committee passed this bill on February 9 and it was passed by the Senate on February 12 with 23 in favor and 11 opposed.

Amend State Law Related to Architectural and Engineering (A&E) Term Contracting

HB907 (Chief Patron Minchew)
HB 907, the bill that allows transportation commissions and VRE a higher procurement limit for General Engineering contracts, passed unanimously in the House General Laws Subcommittee on February 4 and in the House General Laws Committee on February 9. The bill was unanimously approved by the House on February 15. A special thanks to Delegate Minchew for sponsoring this bill on our behalf.

**Review of VRE’s Long Range Plan and Financial Analysis by CTB**


Delegate Dudenhefer presented the VRE budget language with the help of Doug Allen to the House Appropriations-Transportation subcommittee on January 25. We continue to meet with Senators and Delegates about the System Plan 2040 and financial analysis and why it’s important for the CTB to review both and VRE’s impact on the two corridors of statewide significance- I-95 and I-66.

We should know more about the fate of this amendment on “Budget Sunday,” February 21 and remain optimistic it will make it into the budget.

**ADDITIONAL ITEMS OF RELEVANCE TO VRE:**

**Directs DRPT to Convene a Transit Capital Project Revenue Advisory Committee**

HB 1359 (Chief Patron Peace)

HB 1359 establishes the Transit Capital Project Revenue Advisory Board to advise the General Assembly of the cause and impacts of the loss of state transit capital funds and identification of possible additional revenues to recover the capital losses.

In 2007, the General Assembly allowed the Commonwealth Transportation Board to issue Capital Project Revenue (CPR) bonds, requiring a minimum of 20% of the bonds to be allocated to transit capital projects in an effort to meet the demands of a rapidly growing transportation mode. These bonds will be fully allocated in 2018 resulting in a drop of approximately $75 million per year in available transit capital funding.

This bill passed unanimously in the House on February 12.

**NVTC/NVTA**

HB723 (Chief Patron LeMunyon)

This bill transfers the powers and duties of the NVTC to the NVTA. This bill was “laid on the table” by the House Transportation Subcommittee 3 on February 11 with a request that a letter be sent to the Chair for the Joint Commission on Transportation Accountability to review the issue of consolidation.
Notice of Tort Claim Against the Commonwealth, Transportation District, or Locality.

SB611 (Chief Patron Stanley)

This bill concerns VRE as it extends the deadline for filing of claims to an undetermined period of time. It also could place responsibility on VRE personnel or our contractors for knowing about any particular alleged claim long after its occurrence, making it difficult, if not impossible, to ascertain its validity.

This bill was passed by the Senate 25-14 on February 10. It is now assigned to the House Committee for Courts of Justice.

Budget Amendments

Two budget amendments have been filed that direct the distribution of 10 percent of all federal Surface Transportation Program funds distributed by the CTB to a newly established program to support financially stressed transit properties, but limits an individual recipient to no more than 50 percent of such funds in a single year.