Draft 2017/2018 Legislative Agenda

Federal Legislative Strategy:

Generally, there is a need to keep abreast of the new Administration’s policies, programs and personnel. In addition, we will monitor any new funding and financing infrastructure initiatives, possible regulatory reform, changes to INFRA (formally FastLane) and TIGER, and workforce development. Specific issues to be tracked include:

Issue 1: Positive Train Control (PTC) Implementation

- Continue monitoring PTC legislative and regulatory activity.

Issue 2: Commuter Benefits

- Track possible federal tax reform including changes to commuter benefits.
- Analyze and communicate to our Congressional delegation any impacts of proposed changes to current commuter benefit levels.

Issue 3: 49 CFR Part 270 System Safety Program


State Legislative Strategy:

Our focus in Richmond will continue to be on funding, both for transit throughout the Commonwealth and specifically for VRE. In addition to tracking the specific issues outlined below, we will monitor any legislation that may affect VRE.

Issue 1: Protective Floor for the Regional 2.1% Motor Fuels Tax

- VRE will advocate for the creation of a “protective floor” for the regional 2.1% motor fuels tax at February 2013 levels, in coordination with its parent Commissions and member jurisdictions.

- To avoid a reduction in the current level of commuter rail service and the associated increase in traffic congestion on the I-95/I-395 and I-66 Corridors of Statewide Significance (CoSS), a protective floor on the regional 2.1% motor fuels tax must be implemented.

- Without a protective floor, the existing regional 2.1% motor fuels tax generates less revenue than expected due to the drop in fuel prices. This decrease in motor fuels
tax revenues is forcing many VRE jurisdictions to increase general fund outlays to cover their VRE subsidy obligations.

**Issue 2: Additional Commonwealth Transit Capital Support**

- VRE will support its parent commissions as they advocate for a fix to the reduced Commonwealth funding for Transit Capital.
- Will continue to coordinate with NVTC Executive Director Kate Mattice on issues being discussed by the Transit Service Delivery Committee (TSDAC), of which she's a member, and on any legislative initiatives arising from the Revenue Advisory Board’s (RAB) recommendations.

**Issue 3: Additional VRE Capital and Operating Funding**

- The general assembly must identify and secure long term, dependable funding sources for both existing and future commuter rail operations and capital costs to avoid a reduction and eventual termination of commuter rail service in the I-95/I-395 and I-66 CoSS and the accompanying catastrophic traffic congestion.
- VRE has developed a Financial Plan for implementation of its System Plan 2040 that identifies capital and operating requirements needed to implement the plan. A key finding in the Financial Plan is the clear need for increased funding, even without any major expansion of service.
- The deficit just to maintain the current operating scenario averages about $45 million per year (operating $11M and capital $34M) through 2040.
- To implement build-out of the full 2040 scenario, which more than doubles current ridership, will require an average of approximately $65 million per year (operating $20M and capital $45M) through 2040.
- The local jurisdiction members of VRE are financially constrained in their ability to fund existing VRE operations and capital needs and will experience even greater challenges in securing funding for the expansion scenario’s operations and capital costs identified in the System Plan.