

A Resolution Calling for Rails With Trails in Virginia

WHEREAS a sound and functional railway system provides citizens of the Commonwealth of Virginia with a safe and an energy-efficient alternative to our current transportation infrastructure by decreasing traffic, air pollution, reducing wear and damage to our roads and providing energy efficient transportation alternatives to cars and trucks; and

WHEREAS President Obama and Governor Kaine have both strongly advocated the need for rail transportation improvements, including high-speed rail and for greater efforts to promote active lifestyles for healthy Americans, including outdoor physical activities such as walking, hiking and cycling; and

WHEREAS both a superior transportation system and enhanced tourism and recreational activities will provide a needed economic stimulus to both the private sector and our local, state and federal governments; and

WHEREAS the federal Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) and federal Intermodal Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) call for improving safety, reducing traffic congestion, improving efficiency in freight movement, increasing intermodal connectivity, and protecting the environment while empowering state and local officials to make the best choices for their citizens; and

WHEREAS VTrans2025 challenges the Commonwealth to take a leadership role in multi-modal transportation by incorporating pedestrian, bike and rail-friendly design, as appropriate, whenever there is a major reconstruction or construction; and

WHEREAS state and federal tax dollars will be spent over the next decade to improve, upgrade and enhance a number of rail corridors throughout the Commonwealth and citizens should directly benefit by the investment of their public monies; and

WHEREAS a network of statewide rails with trails could provide a connecting infrastructure for many of the statewide, long distance trails including the James River Heritage, Beaches to Bluegrass, Potomac Heritage Trail and Interstate Bike Routes 1 and 76; and

WHEREAS it is both timely and appropriate to encourage the planning and implementation of rails with trails projects across America to include such beneficial needs as the development of the East Coast Greenway as part of the proposed Southeastern High Speed Rail project in Virginia and North Carolina; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED that as the Commonwealth funds rail expansion, enhancement and renovation projects, bike and pedestrian accommodations – rails with trails – shall be required as an integral and mandatory component of these projects and the Commonwealth shall embrace a true multi-modal design philosophy for current and future rails projects, including the Southeast High Speed, Crescent and Heartland Rail Corridors; and be it

RESOLVED FURTHER that the Commonwealth work with other states to support and promote the extension of these trails to create a multi-state network of trails which will benefit citizens throughout the United States for generations.