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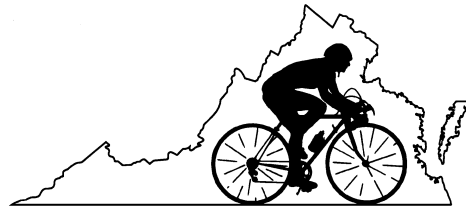
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Virginia Bicycling Federation

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P R E S S R E L E A S E

Hold until May 1

Rails With Trails Called for in State-Funded Rail Enhancement Projects

RICHMOND, VA - May 1, 2009 - Twenty-six national, statewide, and local organizations have signed a resolution asking Virginia Governor Timothy Kaine to require bike and pedestrian trails in all major rail enhancement and improvement projects in Virginia.

"This is a once in a lifetime opportunity to create a 1200 mile network of rails-with-trails across Virginia," said Champe Burnley of the Virginia Bicycling Federation, "Virginia could set the example for other states, with the first part of a bike and pedestrian trail connecting New Orleans to New York, along the Crescent Corridor."

Norfolk Southern's Crescent Corridor is a 1300 mile rail line running through western Virginia, connecting the port of New Orleans with New Jersey and New York. Likewise, its Heartland Corridor runs through Virginia's Southside, connecting Portsmouth, Virginia with Chicago, Illinois.

The Commonwealth of Virginia has already given over \$60 million to railroad companies, to expand and enhance their facilities. Plans call for increased freight and passenger capacity, and multi-modal facilities throughout the state. Norfolk Southern and CSX Transportation are seeking billions more in state and federal dollars to complete these projects.

"With increased pressure on the environment, global warming, increased energy costs and an unstable oil supply, we need to make plans now for alternative transportation. We support high-speed rail and freight, but the public can clearly benefit through accommodations for cycling and walking as well," said Burnley, "Considering the health crisis in America, with rampant obesity, diabetes and heart disease, there are many benefits these trails could provide. Through this effort alone, Virginia could gain over 1100 miles of new trails."

There are currently 142 rails-with-trails throughout the United States, totaling 1142 miles. Another 75 projects, totaling over 900 miles, are currently underway.

"Our country's transportation future will depend on making the most out of all available corridors, including combining trails with active rail lines and roads," says Rails-to-Trails Conservancy Vice President of Trail Development Jeff Ciabotti. "A safe, well-managed rail-with-trail is a great example of efficiently using limited space to offer more transportation choices to more people while benefiting our health and that of our planet."

For a copy of the rails with trails resolution, see:

<http://www.vabike.org/rails-with-trails-resolution.pdf>

For more information, see:

<http://www.vabike.org>

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The Virginia Bicycling Federation is a 501 c(3) non-profit organization that represents the interests of bicyclists throughout Virginia.

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