



October 17, 2011

The Honorable Mark R. Warner  
Senator  
Commonwealth of Virginia  
475 Russel Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Eric I. Cantor  
Majority Leader  
Representative, District 7  
Commonwealth of Virginia  
303 Cannon House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515-4607

The Honorable Frank R. Wolf  
Representative, District 10  
Commonwealth of Virginia  
241 Cannon House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515-4610

The Honorable Robert C. Scott  
Representative, District 3  
Commonwealth of Virginia  
1201 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515-4603

The Honorable James P. Moran  
Representative, District 8  
Commonwealth of Virginia  
2239 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515-4608

The Honorable J. Randy Forbes  
Representative, District 4  
Commonwealth of Virginia  
2438 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515-4604

The Honorable James Webb  
Senator  
Commonwealth of Virginia  
248 Russel Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Bob Goodlatte  
Representative, District 6  
Commonwealth of Virginia  
2240 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515-4606

The Honorable Robert J. Wittman  
Representative, District 1  
Commonwealth of Virginia  
1317 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515-4601

The Honorable Gerald E. Connolly  
Representative, District 11  
Commonwealth of Virginia  
424 Cannon House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515-4611

The Honorable H. Morgan Griffith  
Representative, District 9  
Commonwealth of Virginia  
1108 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515-4609

The Honorable Robert Hurt  
Representative, District 5  
Commonwealth of Virginia  
1516 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515-4605

The Honorable E. Scott Rigell  
Representative, District 2  
Commonwealth of Virginia  
327 Cannon House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515-4602

Dear Members of Virginia's Congressional Delegation:

We are a diverse set of local governments, organizations, and non-profit groups who are writing in support of continued federal money to fund the operating costs of Amtrak's state supported and regional intercity passenger rail corridors, as well as the federal intercity and high speed rail program.

We strongly oppose the House of Representatives' Appropriations subcommittee on Transportation, Housing, and Urban Development's FY 2012 budget (THUD) which, if enacted, would potentially eliminate 64 percent of Amtrak service in Virginia. THUD's elimination of the federal intercity and high speed passenger rail program, which is critical for matching Virginia's own strategic investments in passenger rail, would cripple the Commonwealth's ability to supply our citizens with fast, frequent, and reliable intercity passenger rail service utilizing public-private partnerships.

This proposed budget would cut Amtrak trains serving routes less than 750 miles and trains operated through a partnership between Amtrak and 15 states including the Commonwealth of Virginia. These cuts would immediately eliminate the following services in Virginia, which tie the economy of our Commonwealth to the economies of the Northeast Corridor:

- Amtrak's top rated state sponsored service, the Lynchburg Northeast Regional trains which serves Lynchburg, Charlottesville, Culpeper, Manassas, Burke Centre, and Alexandria, connecting Virginia to Washington, Baltimore, Philadelphia, New York and Boston;
- Richmond's state sponsored Northeast Regional roundtrip trains which serves North Richmond, Ashland, Fredericksburg, Quantico, Woodbridge, Washington, New York, and Boston, and is expected to be extended to Petersburg and Norfolk in 2013;
- North Carolina's Carolinian which serves Petersburg, North Richmond, Fredericksburg, Alexandria, with connections on to New York.

In addition to the cuts mentioned above, the THUD cuts would lead to the eventual elimination of Virginia's other four roundtrip Northeast Regional trains which serve the stations on the Washington-Richmond corridor in addition to serving Richmond's Main Street Station, Williamsburg, and Newport News.

Virginia's regional Amtrak trains account for over 66 percent of Amtrak's estimated FY 2011 Virginia ridership of 1,376,923 passengers, and over the last two years we have seen our Amtrak ridership grow by nearly 35 percent. This year alone, Amtrak stations located within five miles of Virginia's colleges and universities are on-pace, as a whole, to achieve nearly 23 percent growth. Along with many of Virginia's colleges and universities, several military bases, including Fort Belvoir, Quantico, Fort A.P. Hill, Camp Peary, and Fort Lee, are served by Virginia's regional Amtrak service.

As gas prices rise and driving times become more and more unpredictable on Route 29, I-95, I-66, and I-64, these trains are increasingly important to Virginians. Virginians cannot afford to lose access to this valuable transportation option that connects over 5.4 million residents or about 67 percent of the Commonwealth's total population.

The cuts to the federal intercity and high speed rail program will limit what Virginia can do to invest in rail upgrades and will cost us jobs and much needed economic development. The Commonwealth has been very strategic with its rail investments, using an incremental and phased approach to upgrading each of its passenger rail corridors to ensure that it is getting the best investment for the public's dollar, however our larger projects will not be able to move forward without a matching federal commitment.

Few issues are more bipartisan in Virginia than expanding the state's passenger rail service. Republican and Democratic Governors and legislators along with leading members of the business and conservation communities agree that Virginia needs better rail service to deal with traffic and to support economic growth of our major metropolitan regions.

Therefore, we ask that you oppose the effort to eliminate regional and state sponsored Amtrak service included in the house THUD budget, and continue to invest in the federal intercity and high speed passenger rail program.

Sincerely,

Mayor Calvin L. Coleman, Town of Culpeper  
Mayor William D. Eulle, City of Alexandria  
Mayor Joan Foster, City of Lynchburg  
Mayor Paul D. Fraim, City of Norfolk  
Mayor Clyde Haulman, City of Williamsburg  
Mayor Linda Johnson, City of Suffolk  
Mayor Dwight C. Jones, City of Richmond  
Mayor Alan P. Krasnoff, City of Chesapeake  
Mayor Brian Moore, City of Petersburg  
Mayor Dave Norris, City of Charlottesville  
Mayor McKinley Price, City of Newport News  
Mayor Faye O. Prichard, Town of Ashland  
Mayor William D. Sessoms, City of Virginia Beach  
Mayor Iris Tharp, Town of Quantico  
Mayor Molly Ward, City of Hampton  
Mayor Kenneth I. Wright, City of Portsmouth

Chesapeake Alliance  
Coalition for Smarter Growth  
Danville Pittsylvania County Chamber of Commerce  
Future of Hampton Roads  
Greater Norfolk Corporation  
Greater Richmond Partnership  
Hampton Roads Chamber of Commerce  
Hampton Roads Partnership  
Piedmont Environmental Council  
Piedmont Rail Coalition  
Portsmouth Partnership  
Rail Solution  
Richmond Friends of Rail  
Rockbridge Area Conservation Council  
Sierra Club - Virginia Chapter  
Southern Environmental Law Center  
Southeast High Speed Rail Association  
Virginia Association of Railway Patrons  
Virginia Brotherhood of Maintenance and Way Employees  
Virginia Conservation Network  
Virginia League of Conservation Voters  
Virginians for High Speed Rail