



May 23, 2011

The Commonwealth Transportation Board  
Virginia Department of Transportation  
1401 E. Broad Street  
Richmond, Virginia 23219

Dear Secretary Connaughton and members of the CTB:

On behalf of Virginians for High Speed Rail, our board of directors, and our members; I want to thank you for taking the time to review our letter regarding the Commonwealth's draft six-year plan presently before the Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB).

With increased road congestion due to population growth in our metropolitan areas and higher gas prices, Virginia must continue to invest in alternative modes of transportation including intercity and high speed passenger rail. The Commonwealth made significant progress towards that goal with the creation of the Virginia Intercity Passenger Rail Operating and Capital Fund (IPROCF) during the 2011 General Assembly; however the legislature left the short-term funding of IPROCF to the CTB.

Therefore, as we work with members of the legislature to identify a long-term, sustainable, and dedicated funding source for IPROCF, we request the Commonwealth Transportation Board include enough funding in the six-year transportation improvement plan to sustain and expand our intercity and high speed passenger rail service, as contained in the draft plan. Doing this will allow for the continued operation of passenger rail service at communities across Virginia including Alexandria, Manassas, Burke, Woodbridge, Culpeper, Fredericksburg, Charlottesville, Ashland, Richmond, Williamsburg, Newport News, Lynchburg, and eventually a stop in Norfolk.

However, we believe that the CTB should go beyond just the operation of our current passenger trains and include more funding in IPROCF during the next six years for capital improvement projects such as:

- The construction of a new Appomattox Bridge that will allow for more passenger rail service to Petersburg and Norfolk;
- Additional track capacity between Richmond and Newport News to increase reliability and expand service;
- The construction of an Acca Yard bypass north of Richmond to improve reliability;
- Additional track capacity between Lynchburg and Washington, D.C. to increase reliability and expand service;
- Add track capacity between Lynchburg and Roanoke to extend passenger rail service to Roanoke;

Furthermore, funding set aside in IPROCF can be utilized as a matching source for future federal high speed rail grants. Lastly, Virginians for High Speed Rail supports the funding included in the proposed six year plan for the completion of Richmond's Main Street Station, which is vital for the future of the Southeast High Speed Rail Corridor, as well as the connectivity between intercity and high speed passenger rail and local public transit.

We understand the Commonwealth has many needs and limited resources but the future of Virginia's intercity and high speed passenger rail program begins with the CTB voting to fund Virginia's intercity passenger rail services.

Thank you once again for considering our comments. If I can be of any assistance, please do not hesitate to let me know.

Sincerely,

Danny Plaugher  
Executive Director