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Virginians for High Speed Rail Supports Expanding Passenger Rail

Richmond, Virginia- Virginians for High Speed Rail (VHSR) is supporting the expansion of passenger rail service along the Newport News-Richmond-Washington and Lynchburg-Charlottesville-Washington rail corridors. This spring, Amtrak created a report at the request of the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation, suggesting one additional daily train north and south along both corridors.

The estimated cost of each service is \$1.7 million annually for the Newport News-Richmond-Washington rail corridor, and \$1.9 million annually for the Lynchburg-Charlottesville-Washington rail corridor. During fiscal year 2007 ending October 2007, 603,233 passengers rode trains on the Newport News-Richmond-Washington rail corridor, and 176,997 passengers rode trains on the Lynchburg-Charlottesville-Washington rail corridor.

Governor Timothy Kaine, as part of his transportation package, proposed \$14 to \$15 million annually in sustained funding to pay for the expanded state sponsored passenger rail service recommended by Amtrak.

*“When you look at gas prices, which experts are suggesting might exceed \$5 a gallon this summer” stated Mrs. Lois Walker, president of VHSR “and the importance that transportation plays in running Virginia’s economic engine, it makes sense for our elected officials to invest in expanding passenger rail.” President Walker continued “For every one dollar that is invested in public transportation such as intercity passenger rail, an average of four dollars is returned in the way of economic development. The best way to lower taxes is expand your tax base, and the best way to do that is invest in public transportation and passenger rail.” President Walker concluded, “**I urge the members of Virginia’s General Assembly to not leave Richmond without sustained funding for passenger rail service, whether it comes from the grantors tax, statewide sales tax, gas tax, or other funding mechanisms. It has to be sustainable and it has to be at the level Governor Kaine proposed. Virginians are counting on you.**”*

Virginians for High Speed Rail is a 501 (C) (3) non-profit education and advocacy coalition of citizens, businesses, localities, and economic development agencies that promote the expansion of higher speed passenger and freight rail in the Commonwealth of Virginia. For more information please visit our website at www.vhsr.com.

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