



COALITION FOR  
SMARTER GROWTH



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
August 24, 2009

Contact: Daniel Plaugher, VHSR, 804-864-5193  
Stewart Schwartz, CSG, 703-599-6437 (c)

## BUSINESS AND SMART GROWTH GROUPS JOIN TO EXPRESS SUPPORT AS VIRGINIA TURNS IN APPLICATION FOR HIGH-SPEED RAIL FUNDING

Richmond, Virginia – Today, Virginia turns in their application to the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) for funding under the first round of Track One or “shovel ready” projects, as set out in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act’s (ARRA) High-Speed Rail program.

Virginia’s application for about \$74.8 million dollars includes 11.4 miles of third track around Fredericksburg, and will begin the process of upgrading the Washington-Richmond rail corridor from Conventional Rail to Emerging High-Speed Rail status. Emerging High-Speed Rail is classified by the FRA as reasonably expected to reach 90 mph and a 90 percent on-time performance with increased service on a shared use corridor including both freight and commuter rail service. When fully upgraded an Emerging High-Speed Rail corridor will allow passenger trains to connect Washington and Richmond with a 90 minute trip.

“The Chamber is excited about an emerging high-speed rail connection to the Northeast corridor and ultimately to other metropolitan areas in the Southeast. Improving passenger rail access to other communities is a game changing opportunity for the Richmond region’s business community as well as our economic development efforts.” Stated **Kim Scheeler, President and CEO of the Greater Richmond Chamber of Commerce**

“These upgrades to the Washington-Richmond rail corridor will contribute to the ongoing economic revival of downtown Richmond and Fredericksburg and allow interconnections to local transit services, while reducing our energy consumption and our carbon emissions,” said **Stewart Schwartz, Executive Director, Coalition for Smarter Growth**

“This application begins the process of bringing fast, frequent, and reliable passenger rail to the Washington-Fredericksburg-Richmond corridor” stated **Gene Bailey, President of the Fredericksburg Regional Alliance and a Virginians for High Speed Rail Director,** “additionally it will improve our Virginia Railway Express service that will help reduce highway congestion, promote economic development and tourism, and will create and sustain jobs. There is nothing more important to improving a person’s quality of life than reducing their daily commute to work, and this application will begin that process.”

“Extending the Northeast Corridor to Richmond will create or sustain 10’s of thousands of jobs, reduce two million automobile trips and lower fuel consumption by 12 million gallons annually” said **Daniel L. Plaugher, Executive Director, Virginians for High Speed Rail,** “as well as achieve the three 90’s, a 90 mph top speed, a 90 minute commute, and most importantly a 90 percent on-time performance with increased service between Washington and Richmond.”

Today’s application is the “shovel ready” prelude to Virginia’s \$1.6 billion bid to fully upgrade the Washington-Richmond corridor to Emerging High-Speed Rail status by increasing capacity and removing bottlenecks along the length of the corridor. That application under Track Two of the ARRA’s High-Speed Rail program is due in early October. A second Track Two application will be submitted for the Richmond to

Hampton Roads upgrades. The Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transit has positioned Virginia to be ready and competitive for this new program, having completed in-depth planning studies and agreements with Amtrak and CSX railroad.

**Virginians for High Speed Rail (VHSR)** is a non-profit 501(C) (3) coalition of citizens, localities, economic development agencies, community organizations, and businesses that educate and advocate for the improvement and expansion of fast, frequent, and reliable rail service in Virginia. For more information visit [www.vhsr.com](http://www.vhsr.com).

**Greater Richmond Chamber of Commerce (GRCC):** Since 1867, the Greater Richmond Chamber (www.GRCC.com) has taken the lead to enhance and institute change in the Richmond Region, making the region an ideal location for businesses to prosper. The Chamber, a not-for-profit business membership association with more than 1,900 members and a professional staff of 40, is a catalyst for business development and the voice of business in Greater Richmond.

**Coalition for Smarter Growth (CSG)** is the leading organization addressing where and how the region grows, assisting communities in planning for the future by offering solutions to the interconnected challenges of housing, transportation, energy and the environment. The Coalition works in partnership with conservation, transit, housing and business groups in the DC region and many parts of Virginia.

**Fredericksburg Regional Alliance (FRA)** is a public-private economic development marketing partnership created to provide CEOs, presidents, corporate real estate executives, facility planners, and site selection consultants with a single source for comprehensive demographic, economic, and commercial real estate information on the Fredericksburg Region -- which includes the City of Fredericksburg and the counties of Caroline, King George, Spotsylvania, and Stafford -- while also providing a wide range of services designed to facilitate the site selection process.

###