



# COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

Office of the Governor

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May 11, 2007

The Honorable Jim Webb  
United States Senate  
144 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Webb:

I have been advised that you were seeking information regarding the Governor's position on Senate Bill 294, the Passenger Rail Investment and Improvement Act of 2007. This bill authorizes appropriations for Amtrak for FY2007 - FY 2012 and contains a number of other provisions to strengthen and improve Amtrak service.

The bill increases federal Amtrak support, requires changes to the financial accounting and reporting systems utilized by Amtrak, and calls for greater accountability for Amtrak service through the establishment of minimum performance standards. The bill also requires Amtrak to develop and implement a standard methodology for establishing and allocating the operating and capital costs among the states and Amtrak associated with trains operated on state supported routes. The bill authorizes a variety of grants including grants to states for the capital costs of facilities and equipment necessary to provide or improve intercity passenger rail transportation. These grants will require a 20% non-federal match.

The Governor has not taken a position on this bill although we do support the continuation and expansion of Amtrak service in the Commonwealth, and much of the bill achieves that goal. However, given our current transportation funding situation, it is extremely unlikely that the Commonwealth will be able to support the proposed requirements for state financial participation in Amtrak. To achieve a national system of rail service requires federal leadership and financial support.

Amtrak is a key component to Virginia's transportation infrastructure both in the five routes that Amtrak operates in Virginia and in the services that they provide to support the Virginia Railway Express. A strengthened and improved Amtrak is in the best interest of the Commonwealth and the United States.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Pierce R. Homer".

Pierce R. Homer

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Copy: Mr. Mathew O. Tucker  
Mr. Alfonso Lopez  
Mr. Wiley F. Mitchell