

4.D.

**Jurisdiction and Agency Coordinating Committee
Northern Virginia Transportation Authority**

MEMORANDUM

TO: Martin E. Nohe, Chairman
Northern Virginia Transportation Authority

Members
Northern Virginia Transportation Authority

FROM: Tom Biesiadny, Chairman
Jurisdiction and Agency Coordinating Committee
Northern Virginia Transportation Authority

SUBJECT: Endorsement of Testimony for the Commonwealth Transportation Board's
Regarding Changes to the FY 2010 to FY 2015 Six Year Program (Agenda Item
4.D.)

DATE: July 2, 2010

Recommendation:

The Jurisdiction and Agency Coordinating Committee recommends that the Authority endorse the attached testimony on the FY 2011 to FY 2016 Six Year Program that was previously circulated to the NVTA members for comment and presented to the Commonwealth Transportation Board on NVTA's behalf.

Background:

As part of the regular Six Year Program process, the Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB) released a draft FY 2011 to FY 2016 Six Year Program on May 20, 2010, and scheduled a Northern Virginia public hearing for May 26, 2010. Since the draft program was released after the May 13, 2010 NVTA meeting, the Authority approved draft testimony and authorized the Chairman to work with the Jurisdiction and Agency Coordinating Committee to finalize appropriate testimony and circulate that testimony to the Authority members for review. The testimony was circulated and comments were incorporated in the testimony. Chairman Nohe presented the testimony at the CTB public hearing. The final version of the testimony is attached. The CTB approved the final FY 2011 to FY 2016 Six Year Program on June 17, 2010.

NVTA is being asked to formally endorse the final testimony. JACC members and I will be available at the July 8, 2010, NVTA meeting to answer questions.

Cc: Members, NVTA Jurisdiction and Agency Coordinating Committee

**Northern Virginia Transportation Authority
Comments on Proposed
FY 2011 to FY 2016 Six Year Program**

May 26, 2010

Good Evening Secretary Connaughton, Acting Commissioner Whirley, Director Drake, and members of the Commonwealth Transportation Board, I am Sharon Bulova, Chairman of the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors. This evening NVTA Chairman Nohe has asked me to present NVTA's testimony on the Six Year Program. Chairman Nohe regrets that he is not able to be here this evening. NVTA's comments on the Proposed FY 2011 to FY 2016 are as follows:

- We appreciate the Kaine and McDonnell Administrations, VDOT and the CTB working with NVTA to allocate the regional American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) funding. All of the projects funded with this source have been obligated. Without this federal funding, it would not be possible for these projects to proceed at this time.
- We appreciate that the CTB retained NVTA's historical role in the decision process for regional surface transportation program (RSTP) and Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) funds, allowing NVTA to prioritize funding for the critical transportation needs of our region.
- Given the serious transportation problems in our region, we emphasize that construction projects that were previously funded must be implemented as originally scheduled.

- While we understand the difficult position that the CTB is faces due to the lack of revenue and recognize that this public hearing is primarily about the Interstate and primary road programs, we are deeply concerned about the total elimination of secondary and urban construction funding. Not only will this mean that no new significant capacity improvements (widenings and interchanges) will be initiated unless locally funded, but simple, cost effective projects like signalizing new intersections, adding turn lanes and implementing pedestrian improvements will also be eliminated unless funded through other means. Effectively secondary and urban road improvements are at a stand-still. This is unsustainable for urban areas like Northern Virginia. If not addressed, this situation will seriously impact our economy and also compromise the movement of people and goods to and from Northern Virginia and other parts of the Commonwealth.
- On the transit side, thank you for including the Virginia match for Federal dedicated funding for Metro. We appreciate this significant commitment to maintaining Metro's assets and ensuring that Metro can continuing to safely and efficiently meet the region's transportation needs.
- We urge you not to reduce transit funding levels once they are approved. Since local government budgets and tax rates have already been set for FY 2011, reducing the state assistance contracts mid-year (as has been done the last two fiscal years) may result in service cuts and fare increases. At a time when transit usage has increased, and the region is relying on transit to reduce congestion, making such cuts is extremely counter-productive.

- With the declining revenues, we are disappointed to see that VDOT is quickly becoming a maintenance-only agency. As a result, the infrastructure necessary to serve our residents and businesses into the future is falling dramatically behind to the detriment of our economy and our quality of life. New transportation investments are necessary to ensure the economic viability of not only Northern Virginia, but the Commonwealth.
- We look forward to the General Assembly addressing the Commonwealth's dire transportation funding situation soon, hopefully during a Special Session later this year.
- NVTA is hopeful that new revenue sources for transportation will be implemented, consistent with NVTA's Eight Principles for Transportation Funding adopted in April 2008, attached. These principles are still valid, including the need for stable, reliable, on-going regional and statewide transportation funds. As cuts to the Six Year Program illustrate, the Commonwealth cannot afford to wait for Congress to act on a new transportation authorization bill. New State revenues are needed, as soon as possible. Failure to build infrastructure now will only cause the costs to the public to be much greater in the future.
- In addition to addressing the foregoing major issues, NVTA requests that:
 - continue to provide the match for dedicated Federal funds for Metro;
 - the CTB treat transit operating expenses like VDOT maintenance expenses and make these expenses a higher priority than new capital projects;
 - funding for VRE's track leases continue to be provided from federal funds;

- environmental reviews for locally administered projects be simplified and shortened;
- VDOT, DRPT and the CTB address Northern Virginia's concerns with the I-95/395 High Occupancy Toll project (documented in multiple correspondence from NVTAs, the Northern Virginia Transportation Commission, the Potomac and Rappahannock Transportation Commission and the local jurisdictions) as the project moves forward to a comprehensive agreement and financial close. In particular, NVTAs asks the CTB to ensure that the \$195 million promised for transit service and facilities will be maintained as the project is modified to reduce costs. In addition, comments on the most recent transit plan prepared by VDOT consultants should be addressed.
- the CTB expedite the transfer of the Columbia Pike right-of-way within Arlington to local control at its earliest possibility, so Arlington and Fairfax Counties can move forward with plans for multi-modal plan improvements and installation of the streetcar system.
- the CTB consider retaining the revenue sharing program, since it is a cost effective way for VDOT and the local jurisdictions to implement projects. Although the current \$15 million revenue sharing program is appreciated, the program could be much more effective in leveraging local funds, if it is restored to its previous level of \$50 million.
- the CTB and VDOT support, promote, and encourage walking and bicycling as more viable modes of transportation, and in concert with Secretary of Transportation Ray LaHood's recent policy direction, look for opportunities to enhance pedestrian and bicycle connectivity in the Northern Virginia.

THE EIGHT PRINCIPLES

The Northern Virginia Transportation Authority (NVTA) appreciates the significant efforts made by the Governor and the General Assembly in their 2007 provision of a dedicated funding source for Northern Virginia (HB 3202). Unfortunately, on February 29, 2008, the Virginia Supreme Court ruled that the General Assembly did not have a constitutional basis for delegating taxing authority to the NVTA. As a result, Northern Virginia is unable to address its worsening congestion. The implications for the region's and the state's economies is potentially disastrous. In addressing this challenge, the NVTA will use the following principles to guide it in assessing proposed solutions:

1. Transportation is fundamentally a state responsibility; therefore, enactment of new Northern Virginia transportation revenue sources must include a substantial state financial commitment. Any regional/local funding effort should include a broad array of options for choosing among a number of revenue sources;
2. NVTA is comfortable with the seven taxes and fees previously approved for Northern Virginia; however, NVTA is willing to consider alternatives. Any changes in the regional funding packages for Northern Virginia and Hampton Roads should be coordinated with both regions;
3. Northern Virginia's adopted *TransAction 2030* long-range transportation plan requires approximately \$700 million annually in new funding to achieve the 2030 goals. Therefore, exclusive Northern Virginia revenues in the range of \$300 million annually, as well as Northern Virginia's portion of additional statewide revenues, are needed.
4. Any legislation must provide significant increases in transportation funding for all modes from a stable, reliable, and permanent source (s).
5. NVTA appreciates the importance of "buy-in" from all jurisdictions – large and small – to achieve regionally agreed goals. With that in mind, any Northern Virginia transportation revenue package should include both a regional and a local component to allow local jurisdictions to achieve transportation improvements of their choosing (many of which will contribute to overall regional goals).
6. If a statewide package is also enacted, Northern Virginia should receive at least the share that it receives under existing formulas.
7. Continue to match federal interstate and primary road earmarks with state funds, not shift this responsibility to Northern Virginia regional funds.
8. Provide an on-going revenue stream of capital funding for the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) with no sunset, and no federal match requirement. This will provide flexibility beyond matching federal funds, and will ensure that WMATA's on-going capital needs will be funded.

The NVTA stands ready to assist with the development of a meaningful, responsive transportation funding package that will aggressively move the region forward in implementing its transportation plan.