



Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation

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## **Southeast Corridor Receives Key Approval**

RICHMOND - The Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DRPT) announces that the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) for the Southeast Corridor from Richmond to Raleigh has been signed by the Federal Railroad Administration, the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) and DRPT.

Speaking about today's announcement, Governor McAuliffe said, "This approval is an important step toward a higher speed rail system that will enhance our efforts to build a new Virginia economy. Higher speed rail is one of my administration's top transportation priorities because it will generate new economic activity and improve Virginians' quality of life. I look forward to the advancement of this important project."

Aubrey L. Layne, Virginia Secretary of Transportation stated, "The approval of the FEIS toward a higher speed rail system opens up even more opportunity for growth along the I-95 rail corridor. The FEIS for the Richmond to Raleigh segment brings us one step closer to achieving that goal of a connected corridor for freight and passenger rail."

The course to obtain approval for the FEIS was a rigorous one that included much public engagement, as well as a commitment to ongoing collaboration with North

Carolina Department of Transportation and communication to address the input from residents, elected officials, businesses, and agencies throughout the process.

The signed FEIS is the second of three planning documents that allows the project to move forward for construction funding. The next steps consist of a Record of Decision (ROD), anticipated later in 2015, and a series of public hearings to be held in North Carolina and Virginia in the spring of 2016.

“I’m very pleased with the collaboration among the Commonwealth of Virginia, the Federal Railroad Administration, and the State of North Carolina that has resulted in the FEIS for the Richmond to Raleigh segment,” said DRPT Director, Jennifer Mitchell. “Virginia will continue in its work to connect the corridor through its current study of the Richmond to Washington, D.C. segment of the Southeast High Speed Rail Project.”

The Southeast High Speed Rail Project is a series of projects and studies designed to evaluate specific improvements necessary to bring higher speed rail to the region. The improvements to the corridor will also have a significant impact on the fluidity and capacity of the entire rail network, providing benefits for both passenger and freight rail.

#### **About DRPT**

The Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation's mission is to improve the mobility of people and goods while expanding transportation choices in the Commonwealth through rail, public transportation and commuter services.

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