



## SUMMARY

**Virginia/North Carolina High Speed Rail Compact Meeting**  
**West Reading Room**  
**Patrick Henry Building**  
**1111 East Broad Street**  
**Richmond, Virginia**  
**March 21, 2016**  
**10:00 AM – 2:00 PM**

### **Members in Attendance:**

**VA:** Delegate Ron Villeneuve (VA), Delegate Jeion Ward (VA), Senator Kenneth Alexander (VA), Delegate Richard Anderson Jennifer Mitchell (Director of Rail)

**NC:** Representative Bill Brawley (NC), Paul Worley (Director of Rail Division (NCDOT)), Randolph Lickey (NC)

**Member(s) Absent:** Senator Kathy Harrington (NC); Representative Nelson Dollar (NC); Senator Bill Rabon (NC)

Item I: Representative Bill Brawley, Co-Chair, North Carolina brought the meeting to order and introduced Jennifer Mitchell, Director of DRPT. Rep. Brawley commented that he would fill in for the Virginia Chair during the meeting, the position being vacated following the retirement of Senator John Watkins, Virginia.

Director Mitchell introduced the Compact members and provided a safety briefing.

Item II: Rep. Brawley invited Virginia Secretary of Transportation, Aubrey Layne, to provide some opening comments. Secretary Layne welcomed the North Carolina Compact members and noted that the last Assembly session was a success and that Virginia takes the Compact very seriously. He stated that Virginia is continuing to move the Washington, D.C. to Richmond Southeast High Speed Rail project (DC2RVA) forward and that the project will provide freight benefits in addition to the benefits for passenger rail. Secretary Layne said he was looking forward to the “All Aboard Florida” presentation and concluded his remarks with an acknowledgement of and appreciation for Sen. Watkins’ past leadership of the Compact.

Rep. Brawley began his opening remarks by recognizing Keith Weatherly and Walt Gray (name affiliations –from NC) as well as Corey Hill and Randy Brown from the Federal Railroad Administration and noted the success of the Southeast Rail Forum in Charlotte the previous week.

Item III: Rep. Brawley described Sen. Watkins' service in the Compact- specifically his leadership and vision, followed by the presentation of a certificate to Senator Watkins for his leadership role and contributions to the Compact since 1994.

Item IV: Director Mitchell provided a project update presentation for Virginia (see attached presentation) during which Emily Stock, Manager of Rail Planning for DRPT, provided an update on DC2RVAProject.

Paul Worley, Director of the NCDOT Rail Division provided a project update presentation for North Carolina (see attached presentation) during which an update on the Richmond to Raleigh Tier II Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) was also provided by Eddie McFalls. It was noted that the Record of Decision is forthcoming, pending final cultural resources documents, and that funding will then need to be identified for construction.

Item V: Rusty Roberts of Florida East Coast Industries, LLC provided a presentation on All Aboard Florida (see attached presentation). Following the presentation, Secretary Layne noted that the rail right-of-way and crossings in the Miami to Orlando corridor are owned by All Aboard Florida, giving them a significant advantage and cost savings. Mr. Roberts replied that prior ownership of the rail right of way was indeed a significant cost savings that resulted in a lower cost corridor than many comparable projects; however, Mr. Roberts did point out the significant undertaking of upgrading the 340 grade crossings that exist in the corridor. Secretary Layne then asked if there were plans for stations between Miami and Orlando, to which Mr. Roberts replied that there has been some consideration for a Tampa station and that localities that are interested in a stop have been asked to do ridership studies to help justify their requests. Mr. Roberts also stated that there have been as many as 26 freight trains per day on the route in the past, but that they currently run 14 freights per day.

Item VII: Rep. Brawley next mentioned the need for a vision statement and long-term goals for the Compact, that other Southeastern states had shown interest in growing the Compact, and there had been discussion of a greenfield high-speed rail line from Charlotte to Atlanta with a \$13 billion price tag and anticipated travel time of 2.5 hours.

Representative Brawley then polled the Compact members on their support for expansion- Delegate Villanueva, Delegate Anderson, Senator Alexander and Delegate Ward all acknowledged their support for growing the Compact.

Corey Hill remarked that the vision for SEHSR was coming together, citing the near completion of the Richmond to Raleigh Tier II EIS, the DC2RVA Tier II EIS and the Charlotte to Atlanta study. He emphasized how the states that are part of the Northeast Corridor have come together to speak with one voice at the congressional level and that the Southeast needs a similar single voice, especially for projects like the Long Bridge. He urged the Compact members to not get

bogged down in the legal aspects of expanding the Compact and underscored the importance of having a congressional delegation from the Southeast. He also held up the Midwestern region and California as areas that have a strong single voice.

Following a break for lunch, Rep. Brawley resumed the meeting with a discussion of how Virginia and North Carolina can submit joint grant applications. Mr. Hill replied that while there was philosophically no reason that the two states couldn't submit joint applications, the FRA typically requires one point of contact and that the states should decide who will be the administrator for the grant agreement. Mr. Hill went on to comment that it was good to see consensus among the states on expansion of the Compact and that it would be important to have the cooperation of the freight railroads if the Compact is to grow.

Item VIII: David Ewing of States for Passenger Rail provided a presentation of the Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act (see attached presentation).

Item IX: Director Worley and Director Mitchell each provided information on FASTLANE and TIGER competitive Grant opportunities being pursued by their respective states. Director Worley said that North Carolina was pursuing strategic investment and scoring projects to match them with grant opportunities and coordinating with Virginia and others on letters of support for projects. He noted that both Charlotte and Lexington were applying for station funding and that funding was being pursued for freight improvements as well. He did question how pursuing joint grant applications would affect the number of grants for which applications could be submitted.

Director Mitchell informed members that Virginia is evaluating priorities and submitting grant applications for sections of 3<sup>rd</sup> track in Northern Virginia and for the Long Bridge noting that they are high priority. She also expressed a desire to look at possibilities for joint applications.

Item X: Rep. Brawley introduced two motions to the Compact members:

1. Develop a list of project ideas for joint VA/NC applications (motion passed).
2. The Virginia and North Carolina Directors of Rail will each begin to develop a draft 3-year plan outlining how each state will support the other's projects and how outreach will be conducted to bring additional states into the Compact (motion passed).

It was suggested that when the Virginia Chair is selected that he/she should participate in monthly conference calls.

Director Mitchell commented that active engagement would be needed from the Class I railroads to grow the Compact and asked how CSX and Norfolk Southern could best be engaged in the process, to which Rep. Brawley proposed that the Class I railroads be invited to attend Compact

meetings. Both Director Mitchell and Director Worley agreed that the Class I railroads should be invited to participate in meetings.

Delegate Villanueva asked if there were other rail corridors in the county with a similar dynamic, to which Rep. Brawley replied that he was not aware of any. Director Worley suggested that the Compact could look to the West at BNSF's territory.

Del. Anderson pointed out that the Compact had taken a one-year hiatus and that it should resume semi-annual meetings and could alternate between Richmond, Raleigh and a "border" location for meetings. He also mentioned the need to bring congressional delegations into the process and the vacancy in the Virginia delegation. Director Mitchell noted that the Virginia representative is appointed by the Chairman of Senate Rules and that this should occur in April when the Virginia Assembly reconvenes.

Director Mitchell stated that she could look at dates six months out for the next Compact meeting and that South Carolina and Georgia had both expressed interest in attending meetings and should be invited.

Item XI: Hearing no further items for Discussion, Rep Brawley officially adjourned the meeting.