

VIRGINIA - NORTH CAROLINA

Interstate High Speed Rail Compact

c/o NC Department of Transportation
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SUMMARY

VA/NC High Speed Rail Compact Meeting Raleigh, North Carolina September 19, 2011

Members in Attendance: Senator John Watkins (VA); Senator Yvonne Miller (VA); Delegate Jeion Ward (VA); Delegate Richard Anderson (VA); Representative Grey Mills (NC); Senator Fletcher Hartsell (NC)

Member(s) Absent: Paul Cooke (NC); Representative Nelson Dollar (NC); Senator Clark Jenkins (NC); Delegate Ronald Villanueva (VA)

Senator John Watkins, Compact Chair, called the meeting to order at 10:17 a.m.

North Carolina Secretary Eugene Conti, Jr., welcomed the Compact members and guests. He introduced his new Deputy Secretary Paul Morris.

Thelma Drake, Director, Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation Welcomed and thanked everyone for attending. She told the Compact she wants them to have a better understanding of the FRA corridors and how rail plan fits into these corridors. Explained Virginia did not apply for federal rail funds because the project would not be complete by the 2017 deadline, and that VA did not apply for 80/20 funds due to the localities not having the 20% match. Encouraged the Compact to plan a meeting to DC to meet with FRA.

Pat Simmons, Director NCDOT Rail Division, told the Compact that this was a working meeting.

Kevin Page, Chief of Rail Transportation with the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation, provided a general passenger rail and state program update. Mr. Page reviewed the SEHSR map and indicated that the new rail map will show construction for the Raleigh to Charlotte segment.

Paul Worley, Engineering and Safety Director, NCDOT Rail Division, presented information on the Piedmont Improvement Program. He discussed the components,

budget, schedule, construction, and the team approach NCDOT was taking with the project.

Shirley Williams, Environmental and Planning Director, NCDOT Rail Division, discussed the Tier II Environmental Impact Statement – Raleigh to Richmond segment. Public meetings have been scheduled to discuss this work. The FEIS is expected by December 2012 and the ROD by Summer 2013.

Joe Millazzo, Greater Raleigh Chamber of Commerce, Regional Transportation Alliance, presented information on “Connecting the Capitals”. He represented the business point of view for the project. He indicated that the business community supports the Richmond, Petersburg, Raleigh connections.

David Ewing, States for Passenger Rail Coalition and Patrick Simmons, Director, NCDOT Rail Division presented a Federal Program Overview, including Section 209 state supported Amtrak regional service pricing model. The discussed federal legislation, passenger rail investment and improvement act of 2008 (PRIIA); and the Northeast Corridor Tier II Environmental Impact Statement.

Working Lunch:

Informal discussions were conducted during lunch to include “what is high speed rail”; How long will it take to build R2R (5-6 years after the last agreement has been signed); Norlina to Collier Yard; ARRA expiration in 2017; Raleigh to Richmond tier II; Hampton Roads project.

Roundtable Discussion to discuss the definition of SEHSR; and partnering with the Northeast Corridor and Southeast States.

ACTION ITEMS:

1. Senator Watkins asked Director Drake to study the feasibility of a PPTA partnership with Norfolk Southern and CSX. He would like for DRPT to find out what latitude Virginia has in order to do what North Carolina is doing in Norlina. Can a PPTA be used for rail in Virginia? In conjunction with another state?
2. After Director Drake studies the PPTA partnership, can the Compact get an audience with FRA to open potential for funding in the future?
3. Senator Watkins asked that a briefing be scheduled between Pat Simmons, Kevin Page, and CSX, after approval by the Virginia Attorney General, to consider the use of right of ways along the corridor.
4. Senator Watkins suggested that the Compact invite CSX and Norfolk Southern to the next meeting if Pat Simmons and Kevin Page have been able to meet with them prior to January 9, 2012 discuss the use of right of ways.

NEXT MEETING DATE:

January 9, 2012, in Richmond, Virginia.

The Compact adjourned at 1:53 p.m.