

SUMMARY

NC/VA High Speed Rail Compact Meeting Richmond, Virginia January 7, 2011

Members in Attendance: Senator John Watkins, Senator Yvonne Miller, Delegate Richard Anderson, Delegate Jeion Ward, Delegate Ronald Villanueva, Paul Cooke, Representative John May, Representative Nelson Cole, Senator Fletcher Hartsell (via phone)

Member(s) Absent: Senator Clark Jenkins

Senator John Watkins, Compact Chair, called the meeting to order at 11:00 a.m.

Agenda was approved by unanimous vote. Minutes from the July 12, 2010 inaugural meeting of the Compact approved by unanimous vote.

Public comments are requested, and none were forthcoming.

On behalf of Governor McDonnell and Secretary of Transportation Sean Connaughton, Deputy Secretary of Transportation Dave Tyeryar welcomed the Compact members and guests.

Mark Yachmetz, Associate Administrator of the Federal Railroad Administration Office of Railroad Policy and Program Development provided an FRA update. Mr. Yachmetz stated that the federal government is on the verge of creating a rail program that will look like the interstate highway program. He stated that Virginia and North Carolina are making good progress toward this end also. He discussed the challenges faced and the vision and next steps which will include fiscal year 2012 Presidential Budget Requests and legislation to define the rail program going forward.

Senator Yvonne Miller requested that the Compact members be added to FRA's mailing lists. Pat Simmons will coordinate this. Senator Watkins inquired about the possibility of the federal government launching a program to promote passenger rail service and to create similar agreements between different states and the railroads.

Kevin Page, Chief of Rail Transportation for the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation, gave a passenger rail update on the activities of DRPT in the development of intercity conventional and high speed passenger rail. Mr. Page's update included an overview of the Southeast High Speed Rail Corridor activities and points for the compact to consider in the development of the Southeast High Speed Rail Corridor.

Patrick Simmons, Rail Division Director for the North Carolina Department of Transportation, provided an update on the high speed rail corridor development, and North Carolina's work to advance the Southeast Corridor projects. Marc Hamel, Manager of the Southeast High Speed Rail Project, updated the members on the Tier II environmental impact statement; selection of alignments; and the development of a final draft EIS.

Danny Plaughter, Director of Virginians for High Speed Rail reported on the 2010 Southeast High Speed Rail Conference.

The Southern Mid-Atlantic Business Community presented a Resolution expressing their support of Higher Speed Rail. Kim Scheeler, President/CEO of the Greater Richmond Chamber of Commerce; Dana Dickens, President/CEO of Hampton Roads Partnership; and Joe Novak, Intercity High Speed Rail Chair of the Regional Transportation Alliance, each spoke about the importance of high speed rail in their region.

During the Compact's general discussion, it was discussed that the next meeting be held in Washington, D.C. and Congressional Representatives invited.

The Compact adjourned at 2:00 p.m.