



VIRGINIA RAILWAY EXPRESS
OPERATIONS BOARD

June 16, 2020

VIA EMAIL

The Honorable Donald Beyer
U.S. House of Representatives
1119 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Gerald Connolly
U.S. House of Representatives
2238 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Eleanor Holmes Norton
U.S. House of Representatives
2136 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

VIA EMAIL

The Honorable Abigail Spanberger
U.S. House of Representatives
1239 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Jennifer Wexton
U.S. House of Representatives
1217 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Rob Wittman
U.S. House of Representatives
2055 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Members of Congress:

The Virginia Railway Express (VRE) asks you to support the ***Investing in a New Vision for the Environment and Surface Transportation in America (INVEST in America) Act***, H.R. 2.

Thanks to your leadership and support in passing the ***Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act***, VRE is using ***CARES Act*** funding to help offset revenue losses due to reduced ridership and costs incurred to help our workforce and commuters remain healthy and safe as we continue to respond to the COVID-19 crisis.

It is, however, vital for Congress to further stimulate the economy and address our nation's transportation needs by pursuing reauthorization of the ***FAST Act*** as soon as possible by passing the ***INVEST in America Act***.

As you are aware, the Commonwealth of Virginia and VRE are working in concert to enhance capacity for both passenger and freight movements on the railroads that make up VRE's Fredericksburg and Manassas lines. Via the unprecedented agreement announced late last year between the Commonwealth, CSX and Amtrak, Virginia is taking the lead role for the Long Bridge project and other related capital track enhancements. VRE, meanwhile, continues to pursue its *System 2040 Plan*, which



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Transportation Commission
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703-524-3322



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1500 King Street, Suite 202
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Potomac and Rappahannock
Transportation Commission
14700 Potomac Mills Road
Woodbridge, VA 22192
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will enable our commuter rail system to provide over 50,000 weekday trips by 2040 – more than doubling the 19,000 daily trips normally conducted. VRE is focused on station and platform capital improvements, additional rolling stock procurement, and other activities to increase operational efficiencies.

There are numerous funding, policy and program provisions in the robust ***INVEST in America Act*** that will allow VRE to use formula programs and compete for the discretionary funding necessary for us to realize our *System Plan 2040*. Your support, and that of your colleagues, will not only help VRE and systems across the country to provide new jobs, mitigate traffic congestion, enhance safety, and create “greener” transportation alternatives, but will also rev up our nation’s economy as we get back to work.

The ***INVEST in America Act*** would provide a long-term, \$495 billion, five-year reauthorization. Priority funding programs for VRE include:

- Increasing the funding for transit formula programs to \$82 billion.
- Designating \$19.9 billion for State of Good Repair through a new grant program, *PRIME (Passenger Rail Improvement, Modernization, and Expansion)* that would fund capital projects that improve the state of good repair, optimize performance, and expand intercity rail passenger transportation.
- Providing more than \$9 billion for large highway, transit, and freight projects, similar to the *BUILD (Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development)* program.
- Allotting \$7 billion for *CRISI (Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements)* grants and adding commuter rail project sponsor eligibility.

Thank you again for your continued support of VRE and the communities we serve. Should you have any questions or need further information please contact VRE’s Chief of Staff, Joe Swartz, at jswartz@vre.org or 703.838.5425.

Sincerely,



Gary Skinner

Chairman

Virginia Railway Express Operations Board