2020 Special Session I

Budget Bill - HB5005 (Chapter 56)

Bill Order » Office of Transportation » Item 443

Department of Rail and Public Transportation

Item 443	First Year - FY2021	Second Year - FY2022
Financial Assistance for Rail Programs (61000)	**$137,107,434**	**$197,112,195**
Rail Industrial Access (61001)	$3,000,000	$3,000,000
Rail Preservation Programs (61002)	$14,523,370	$14,523,370
Passenger and Freight Rail Financial Assistance Programs (61003)	$119,584,064	$179,588,825
Fund Sources:		
Special	$1,000,000	$1,000,000
Commonwealth Transportation	$136,107,434	$196,112,195

Authority: Title 33.2, Code of Virginia.

A. Except as provided in Item 444, the Commonwealth Transportation Board shall operate the Shortline Railway Preservation and Development program in accordance with § 33.2-1602, Code of Virginia. As determined by the board, funds apportioned pursuant to § 33.2-1526, Code of Virginia, shall be appropriated to the Shortline Railway Preservation and Development Program. Total funding appropriated to the Shortline Railway Preservation and Development Program from this source shall not exceed $4,000,000 the first year and $4,000,000 the second year.

B. The Commonwealth Transportation Board shall operate the Rail Industrial Access Program in accordance with § 33.2-1600, Code of Virginia. The board may allocate funds pursuant to § 33.2-358, Code of Virginia, to the fund for construction of industrial access railroad tracks.

C. Of the funds appropriated pursuant to Chapters 1019 and 1044 of the 2000 Acts of Assembly for passenger rail capacity improvements in the I-95 passenger rail corridor between Richmond and the District of Columbia, the Director of the Department of Rail and Public Transportation is authorized to utilize any remaining funds along the described corridor for the development of intercity passenger rail enhancements to include rail improvements and passenger station facilities.

D. Notwithstanding the provisions of § 33.2-1526.2 C, the distribution of funds in the Commonwealth Rail Fund shall be:

1. Remaining balances as of June 30, 2020 in the Rail Enhancement Fund pursuant to § 33.2- 1601 and the Intercity Rail Operating and Capital Fund pursuant to § 33.2-1603 shall be transferred to the Commonwealth Rail Fund.

2. In order to facilitate the financing activities of the Virginia Passenger Rail Authority, all cash balances as of July 1, 2020 shall be transferred to the Authority from the Commonwealth Rail Fund. This transfer shall not be transacted until after an agreement has been fully executed between the Department and the Authority that requires funds to be transferred from the Authority to the Department for the prompt payment of any expenditures on the projects administered by the Department.

3. During the interim period between July 1, 2020, and the formal establishment of the Virginia Passenger Rail Authority (Authority), the Department shall be responsible for conducting all necessary business functions assigned to the Authority. Formal establishment shall include appointments to the Authority's board of directors, a formal meeting of the board, the hiring of an executive director, and the execution of the agreement required in subparagraph D.2.

E. Because of the overwhelming need for the delivery of services provided by the investment in a balanced transportation system in the Commonwealth, and in an effort to deliver intercity passenger trains utilizing the Commonwealth's investments and to increase passenger train frequencies to Norfolk and Roanoke, notwithstanding the provisions of § 33.2-1601 and § 33.2-1603, Code of Virginia, the Commonwealth Transportation Board may only make further investments in intercity passenger rail capacity to serve new markets in North Carolina, provided the Six-Year Improvement Plan adopted pursuant to § 33.2-214, Code of Virginia includes sufficient funding to complete projects underway to deliver train capacity improvements and provides the funding for service for additional passenger rail frequency to Norfolk and an extension of passenger rail to Roanoke.

F. The Department of Rail and Public Transit shall evaluate the operating and capital costs associated with an extension of the Virginia Railway Express commuter rail service from Manassas to Gainesville. The Director of the Department of Rail and Public Transportation shall submit an evaluation of these costs to the Governor, the Chairs of the House Appropriations Committee and the Senate Finance and Appropriations Committee by June 30, 2021.

G. Out of the amounts in this item for Passenger and Freight Rail Assistance Programs, such funding as may be necessary is allocated to study the feasibility of an east-west Commonwealth Corridor passenger rail service connecting Hampton Roads, Richmond, and the New River Valley consistent with the provisions of Senate Joint Resolution 50 of the 2020 General Assembly.