

Status of Joint Subcommittee to Study JLARC Recommendations on Aspects of Virginia's Transportation Programs

The Joint Subcommittee was established by HJR 211, offered during the 2002 Session by Delegate Vincent F. Callahan, Jr. "to study the implementation of recommendations of the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission on aspects of Virginia's transportation programs, and the efficacy of transferring certain responsibilities of the Virginia Department of Transportation and local governments." In conducting its study, the joint subcommittee was specifically charged with determining:

1. The level of responsibility that the Department of Transportation should bear for the maintenance of roads in private developments;
2. The desirability and feasibility of shifting the primary responsibility for mass transit programs in Northern Virginia from local governments to the Department of Transportation; and
3. The desirability and feasibility of shifting the primary responsibility for construction and maintenance of secondary roads from the Department of Transportation to local governments.

The work of the joint subcommittee was to be assisted by a technical advisory committee, appointed by the chairman, to address the highway classification and allocation recommendations made by JLARC. To the best of my knowledge, this technical advisory committee has not yet been appointed.

Since its creation, the HJR 211 Subcommittee has held three meetings:

- At George Mason University on June 7, 2002,
- In Richmond on October 28, 2002, and
- At the Potomac-Rappahannock Transportation Commission Headquarters (Woodbridge, VA) on May 20, 2003.

At its first meeting, the Subcommittee was briefed by JLARC staff on its recommendations, by Legislative Services staff on the highway construction fund allocation formulas set out in the Code and their historic evolution, and by House Appropriations Committee staff on the interplay of the allocation formulas and the budgetary process -- both state and federal.

The second meeting heard from Deputy Secretary of Transportation Ralph Davis, who discussed Virginia's Statewide Transportation Plan, highway needs assessment, and VDOT's response to recommendations by the Auditor of Public Accounts and Subcommittee staff from the Division of Legislative Services and the House Appropriations Committee staff again reviewed the current highway construction allocation formulas, the history of legislation dealing with the statewide highway needs assessment and the Statewide Transportation Plan, and recommendations from JLARC and others relating to transportation program reforms. On the basis of staff's recommendations, the members agreed to recommend three pieces of legislation to the 2003 Session of the General Assembly:

- Elimination of obsolete Code references to the "statewide arterial highway network" and use of local "federal revenue-sharing funds" for highway purposes and
- Creation of a special bridge fund.

Of these, the bills (HB 1487 and 1488, both offered by Del. Rollison) eliminating references to the "arterial network" and "federal revenue sharing funds" passed and were signed into law by the Governor. Several pieces of legislation (HB 1253, offered by Del. Rollison and carried over from the 2002 Session; HB 1486, also offered by Del. Rollison; and HB 2202, offered by Del. Jones of Suffolk) seeking to create a special bridge fund were referred to Del. Callahan's HJR 211 Subcommittee for further consideration. The subcommittee postponed consideration of other potential legislative recommendations until next year.

The Subcommittee's 2003 meeting heard from Secretary Clement on the Commonwealth Transportation Board's tentative six-year improvement plan for fiscal years 2004 through 2009; , from House Appropriations Committee staff on recent transportation trends in transportation-dedicated revenues and the availability of funds for the state transportation construction program; and from patrons of transportation-finance-related legislation offered during the 2003 Session (in both the House and the Senate) and subsequently referred to Del. Callahan's Subcommittee for their consideration. (For your information, a list of these bills and their patrons is attached.)

At present, no additional meetings of this Joint Subcommittee are scheduled.

2003 Bills Referred "by Letter" to HJR 211 Subcommittee

SB 778 (Blevins) Maintenance and operation of drawbridges in Chesapeake.
SB 1024 (Reynolds) "Smart Road" fund.
SB 1108 (Whipple) Allocation of federal highway safety funds.
SB 1115 (Whipple) Commonwealth Mass Transit Fund.
SB 1270 (O'Brien) Allocation of proceeds of Transportation Trust Fund.
SB 1271 (O'Brien) Secondary highway system construction funds.
HB 1394 (Lingamfelter) Secondary system highway construction fund allocations.
HB 1485 (Rust) Urban and secondary highway system construction allocations.
HB 1595 (R.G. Marshall) Transportation Trust Fund.
HB 2144 (Rust) Primary system highway construction allocation.
HB 2147 (Rust) Unpaved road fund.
HB 2249 (Watts) Primary highway system construction funds allocation.
HB 2650 (R.G. Marshall) State highway systems.
HB 2718 (Nutter) Allocation of highway construction funds.