



VIRGINIA RAILWAY EXPRESS

LEGISLATIVE AGENDA



2026

Virginia Railway Express (VRE)

Draft 2026 Legislative Agenda

Federal Funding, Legislative and Regulatory Issues

VRE is pursuing a federal agenda focused on securing sustainable funding, streamlining regulations, and aligning national policy with its long-term System Plan 2050 goals. Priorities include advocating for strong support for public transportation and commuter rail in the next surface transportation reauthorization, reforming the liability insurance cap to ease insurance burdens, and advancing federal grant opportunities to fund service and infrastructure enhancements.

VRE also supports appropriations at the full authorized level of the current Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) and will monitor U.S. DOT rulemaking. The agency is working to preserve Surface Transportation Board jurisdiction, ensure continued access to Washington Union Station, and promote federal workforce incentives that encourage rail commuting.

Legislative and Regulatory Issues:

Surface Transportation Reauthorization

Engage with the Virginia congressional delegation, relevant committees, and industry stakeholders to:

- Ensure robust funding levels for commuter rail and transit.
- Advocate for practical reporting requirements and environmental streamlining.
- Promote policies that support VRE's long-term growth and operational flexibility.

Rail Passenger Transportation Liability Cap

Collaborate with industry partners to:

- Extend the implementation timeline for liability cap increases to up to 365 days.
- Explore legislative opportunities to lower the cap or otherwise ease insurance costs.

System Plan 2050

Champion federal policies and programs that align with VRE's long-range vision.

Identify opportunities to support System Plan 2050 initiatives through federal programs and partnerships.

Federal Grant Programs

Work with USDOT, Virginia's delegation, and regional stakeholders to:

- Secure support for discretionary grant applications submitted by VRE, VPRA, or partners.
- Emphasize projects that directly enhance VRE service and regional mobility.

Annual Appropriations & IIJA Implementation

Advocate for:

- Full funding of authorized levels in annual appropriations.
- Effective implementation of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA).
- Continued support for commuter rail and transit.

U.S. DOT Regulations and Rulemaking

Monitor and respond to:

- Proposed guidance and rulemakings affecting VRE operations and capital projects.
- Opportunities to advance permit streamlining and regulatory efficiency.

Surface Transportation Board (STB) Jurisdiction

Educate policymakers on the importance of preserving STB authority over VRE and similar commuter railroads.

Monitor developments affecting VRE's ability to seek STB relief in negotiations with Amtrak.

Washington Union Station Redevelopment

Ensure VRE's interests are represented in ongoing FRA, Amtrak, and Union Station Redevelopment Corporation planning for Washington Union Station.

Advocate for improved commuter rail access to ensure long-term operational needs are met.

Federal Workforce and Commuting Incentives

Track federal workforce policies related to telework, agency restructuring, and RIFs.

Promote incentives that encourage federal employees and contractors to commute via VRE.

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State and Regional Funding and Legislative Issues

VRE is focused on legislation that would secure sustainable state and regional funding to support both current operations and future service expansion outlined in its System Plan 2050. VRE is working to educate legislators on the importance of long-term investment in commuter rail and its role in the Commonwealth's Transforming Rail in Virginia (TRV) program. Also, VRE supports legislation emerging from the SJ28 and DMVMoves initiatives that would provide critical funding.

VRE is also committed to protecting and strengthening the Commuter Rail Operating and Capital Fund. Additionally, VRE is coordinating with its parent commissions to support updates to Virginia's Freedom of Information Act that would allow greater flexibility for electronic meetings while maintaining transparency and public access.

State and Regional Funding

Educate legislators on:

- VRE's role in the Commonwealth's TRV program.
- The need for sustainable funding to support expanded service envisioned in System Plan 2050.

Support legislation from the SJ28 and DMVMoves initiatives that:

- Sustains current operations.
- Funds service expansion and capital needs, including future rolling stock replacement.

Commuter Rail Operating and Capital Fund (CROC)

Monitor transportation funding proposals to protect CROC revenue sources.

Explore options for:

- Increasing and diversifying CROC funding.
- Reducing reliance on the gas tax through more sustainable alternatives.

Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)

Coordinate with parent commissions and stakeholders to:

- Support legislation that enhances flexibility for electronic meetings.
- Maintain transparency while improving public access and member participation.