



Virginia Railway Express | 2025 Legislative Agenda

Federal Funding, Legislative and Regulatory Issues

Rail Passenger Transportation Liability Cap

Collaborate with industry stakeholders in urging Congress to make changes to the timeline for implementation of increases to the Rail Passenger Transportation Liability Cap from 30 days to as much as 365 days, as well as any other changes to the liability cap adjustment process that would be advantageous to the VRE.

First Street Tunnel

Monitor activities related to the maintenance and upgrade of Amtrak's First Street Tunnel, which is the entrance to/exit from Washington Union Station for all passenger rail service south of Union Station. The First Street Tunnel remains a bottleneck and needs additional maintenance and upgrades to increase throughput capacity. Amtrak has initiated a First Street Tunnel Project study. VRE.

Federal Grant Programs

Work with the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT), Virginia's congressional delegation, relevant congressional committees, and regional stakeholders to educate and secure administration and congressional support for discretionary grant applications submitted by VRE or the Virginia Passenger Rail Authority or others for projects directly impacting VRE service.

Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act/Bipartisan Infrastructure Law Implementation and Yearly Appropriations

Continue to partner with industry stakeholders and associations to advocate for robust annual appropriations, funding levels at the authorized levels, and appropriate implementation policies to support commuter rail and mass transit. Engaging with the Virginia congressional delegation, providing comments on policy and regulatory position documents and collaborating on legislative advocacy will be necessary to ensure commuter rail interests are reflected in fiscal-year funding levels.



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U.S. DOT Regulations and Rulemaking

Track and comment on proposed guidance, rulemakings, or requests for comment from U.S. DOT to advance permit streamlining reforms applicable to VRE's operations and Capital Improvement Program, as well as any proposed new or changes to existing rail-related regulations.

Surface Transportation Board (STB) Authority

Educate Congress and the Administration on the imperative of preserving STB's jurisdiction over VRE and other common-carrier commuter railroads.

Monitor industry, congressional and administration efforts affecting the ability of VRE, and similar commuter railroads, to seek relief from the STB when negotiating with Amtrak. Submit comments, as necessary, to regulatory bodies to advocate for preserving STB jurisdiction over VRE.

Federal Workforce

Follow congressional and administration actions focused on the federal workforce's return to in-office work and permanent work-from-home policies.





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State Funding and Legislative Issues

Commuter Rail Exemption for Virginia State Tax on Surplus Lines Insurance

Continue efforts to advance legislation introduced in the 2024 General Assembly session that would exempt insurance policies for rolling stock and operating properties of railroads used for commuter rail service in the commonwealth from state tax on surplus lines insurance.

Future Additional Service Funding

Educate legislators on VRE's plans for additional service as part of the Commonwealth's Transforming Rail in Virginia program and VRE's 2050 System Plan to advance the Commonwealth's efforts to identify additional sustainable funding for VRE operations.

Monitor meetings of the SJ28 Subcommittee and Technical Working Group, and the DMVMoves Task Force and its advisory groups, analyzing any recommendations or legislation that results from their efforts.

Commuter Rail Operating and Capital Fund (CROC)

Monitor all proposed transportation funding legislation to ensure there are no adverse changes to CROC revenue sources..

Explore ways to diversify CROC revenue sources to include sustainable options that will reduce reliance on the gas tax.

Freedom of Information Act

Coordinate with VRE's parent commissions and other stakeholders on legislative proposals that would maximize the flexibility of VRE and other public bodies to make policies on the conduct of electronic meetings that allow greater access to the public and opportunities for members to participate, while remaining open and transparent to the public..

