

## Tired of driving to DC? You can do something about it!

### SUPPORT NEW *Direct* PASSENGER RAIL SERVICE to WASHINGTON AND NEW YORK CITY

#### Background

The Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation (VDRPT) is developing a new State Rail Plan that will guide Virginia's investments in passenger rail for decades to come. You can and *should* influence what goes into the plan. Speak out for the US29 rail corridor, which has significant unmet needs for passenger rail service.

Every day, Central Virginia travelers are denied seats on Amtrak because the trains are full or the seats are reserved for long-distance ticket-holders. Only *one* daily north-south train serves the US29 Corridor on a seven-days-per-week basis. The trains arrive late, sometimes *very* late, because they are tied up by freight in other states further down the line. Amtrak is not able to fulfill a growing and demanding passenger rail market in Central Virginia. ***Direct passenger service in the US29 corridor is the solution!***

In a recent report to VDRPT, Amtrak put it simply: the US29 corridor is "under-served" by passenger rail. Amtrak recommends that the state partner with them to offer new daily, *direct* passenger service from Lynchburg to Washington DC, "...as soon as possible." The new service would go on to Boston and New York City and include stops in Charlottesville, Culpeper, Manassas and Alexandria. Because the trains would be regional, rather than long-distance, they would be "on-time" 95% of the time. This is a plan that can be implemented easily and at relatively low cost, according to the report.

Since the Amtrak report, significant developments give us reason to believe this new service is possible:

- Norfolk Southern Railroad, which owns the tracks between Lynchburg and Alexandria, has submitted applications for State Rail Enhancement Funds to help pay for track upgrades that would improve the speed and safety for new passenger trains. VDRPT has recommended the projects for funding.
- Amtrak, Norfolk Southern and VDRPT are in negotiations about how to implement the new service.

### **Why do we need to take action now?**

The State Rail Plan is due to be released in June, 2008. VDRPT has asked members of the traveling public for their input. Now is your chance to write to VDRPT and tell them that there is a need for more frequent, reliable and accessible intercity passenger rail service in the US29 corridor, and that you support their efforts to develop a State Rail Plan that will address those needs. There are many rail priorities in the Commonwealth, with limited resources to meet them all. *It's time to invest in the US29 corridor and the economic, transportation and environmental benefits that high-quality passenger rail would bring.*

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### **If you would like to help**

**Let the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation know that *you support***

- **Daily, direct passenger service in the US 29 Corridor as the top priority in the State Rail Plan**
- **Implementing the Amtrak proposal for direct daily service from Lynchburg to Washington, DC and New York, and**
- **Funding the rail infrastructure improvements needed by Norfolk Southern to support added passenger service for the US29 corridor.**

**Write by June 1 to:** Matthew Tucker, Director  
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### **Other points to make in your comments**

Commend VDRPT for their work to identify our state's rail needs and to develop a short- and long-term plan to meet those needs. Current passenger rail service in the US29 corridor is inadequate and unreliable and cannot meet the travel needs of the business community, students, tourists or the traveling public. Commercial and residential growth in this corridor has created congestion, unsafe roads and delays. The future economic health of communities on this corridor will depend upon their vital connections to the population and commercial centers to the north. Access to rail is an environmentally friendly, fuel efficient, and economical transportation alternative that will help sustain our quality of life and reduce the need to widen US29 and I-66.

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*"Working to bring better passenger rail alternatives to Virginia's US29 corridor."*