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Appendix D
CTB Resolution

COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

Commonwealth Transportation Board

Pierce R. Homer
Chairman

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Agenda item # 1

RESOLUTION
OF THE
COMMONWEALTH TRANSPORTATION BOARD

October 11, 2006

MOTION

Made By: Mr. Bowie Seconded By: Dr. Davis
Action: Motion Carried, Unanimously

Title: Interstate 81 Corridor

WHEREAS, the Virginia Department of Transportation and the Federal Highway Administration entered into a Process Streamlining Agreement for a tiered environmental study of transportation needs, including highway, rail, and operational needs in the Interstate 81 Corridor in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act; and,

WHEREAS, a Process Streamlining Agreement between the Department and the Federal Highway Administration identified decisions that would be made at the completion of a Tier I Study, including improvement concepts in the Interstate 81 Corridor and whether to advance Interstate 81 as a toll pilot project; and

WHEREAS, in cooperation with the Federal Highway Administration, the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation, and numerous other state and federal agencies, a study was conducted and a Tier I Draft Environmental Impact Statement was published and circulated for public review and comment; and

WHEREAS, the Tier I Draft Environmental Impact Statement indicated the need for improvements to Interstate 81 in order to improve safety in the Interstate 81 Corridor and to meet the needs of future travel demand in the Interstate 81 Corridor; and

WHEREAS, public meetings and public hearings were conducted to present the underlying study results; and

WHEREAS, the study indicates that portions of Interstate 81 Corridor need additional highway capacity by 2035 but that no single corridor-wide solution meets the needs of future travel demand in the corridor without providing excess or insufficient capacity in the corridor, and that a varying number of general purpose highway lanes would most efficiently address the future travel demand; and

WHEREAS, eight logical corridor segments where identified in the study; and,

WHEREAS, the I-81 corridor traverses historic battlefields, towns and other areas of great scenic beauty requiring context sensitive design solutions; and,

WHEREAS, since 2001, there have been four studies published addressing rail improvements in the Interstate 81 Corridor, including the Tier I Environmental Impact Statement; and

WHEREAS, the 2006 General Assembly has directed that an additional study be conducted to identify improvements and funding mechanisms needed to divert truck traffic off of Interstate 81 and onto rail; and

WHEREAS, the best approach to meet the directive from the General Assembly in the most timely and cost efficient manner is for the Department of Rail and Public Transportation to conduct an Interstate 81 Freight Rail Study independent of the Environmental Impact Statement process in cooperation with the Secretary of Transportation and Norfolk Southern Railway; and

WHEREAS, such freight rail study will examine freight impacts along 500 miles of the Interstate 81 Corridor, identify rail improvements, examine various scenarios of truck freight diversion to rail and determine the public benefits derived as a result of specified rail improvements in this corridor.

WHEREAS, the Department of Transportation should continue to consider a toll pilot project on Interstate 81 other than for dedicated truck lanes as part of a general exploration of additional financial resources needed to support long term improvements in the Interstate 81 Corridor; and

WHEREAS, in refining the Tier I Environmental Impact Statement and in developing the Tier II Environmental Impact Statement, the findings of the ongoing, independent Interstate 81 Freight Rail Study should be fully utilized, and;

WHEREAS, there is an immediate need for safety and operational improvements within the Interstate 81 Corridor, including the construction of dedicated truck climbing lanes, the extension of on and off ramps at various interchanges, the installation and upgrading of

guardrail, the modification of major interchanges, and other safety and operational improvements within the Interstate 81 Corridor.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Commonwealth Transportation Board that:

- The Department of Rail and Public Transportation shall conduct a Interstate 81 Freight Rail Study in cooperation with the Office of the Secretary of Transportation and Norfolk Southern Railway, independent of the Environmental Impact Statement process, in order to expedite short term rail improvements and to study the potential long term diversion of truck traffic along the Interstate 81 Corridor to rail, and

- The Department of Transportation shall take immediate action to implement safety and operational improvements within the corridor, including, but not limited to, dedicated truck climbing lanes, the extension of on and off ramps at various interchanges, the installation and upgrading of guardrails, the modification of major interchanges, and other safety and operational improvements within the Interstate 81 Corridor, giving priority to improvements addressing demonstrated safety needs and achieving the greatest safety benefit; and

- The Department of Transportation in cooperation with the Federal Highway Administration shall finalize the Tier I Environmental Impact Statement in accordance with the Process Streamlining Agreement to improve existing Interstate 81 by constructing, with the advice and consent of the Commonwealth Transportation Board, not more than two general purpose lanes in each direction, only where needed to address 2035 travel demands; that for the Tier II environmental review process, projections of future travel demand be based on then current assumptions of rail diversion and other factors in the corridor taking into account the I-81 Freight Rail Study; that the Department of Transportation shall pursue the ongoing toll pilot project pursuant to federal law other than for dedicated truck lanes; and, that the Tier II environmental review process for the Corridor improvements may be implemented using the eight logical corridor segments identified in the Tier I Environmental Impact Statement, and:

- That future improvements to the Interstate 81 Corridor be in compliance with a context sensitive solutions approach and the Commonwealth Transportation Board's adopted policies pertaining to multi-modal transportation and land use planning.

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