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House Republicans Advance Economic-Growth Driven Transportation Funding Plan

- The Only Comprehensive Transportation Plan of 2009 Session Is Introduced by House Republicans --
- Plan Reinvests \$1 Billion of Future Revenue Growth in Critical Transportation Projects --
- \$570 Million Statewide Bond Package Will Stimulate Job Creation, Ease Congestion & Improve Safety --

RICHMOND, VA – Recognizing the importance of improving Virginia’s transportation system to help stimulate economic recovery and restore economic prosperity across the Commonwealth, Virginia House of Delegates Speaker William J. Howell (R-Stafford) and Delegates G. Glenn Oder (R-Newport News), David B. Albo (R-Fairfax) and Delegate Phillip A. Hamilton (R-Newport News) today detailed an reform-oriented, and economic growth-driven transportation package that will create jobs, ease congestion and improve safety without raising taxes. The House today gave preliminary bipartisan approval (65-30) to the funding and reform package, with a final vote expected tomorrow.

Highlights of the 2009 House Republican Transportation package include:

- Accelerates the issuing of \$570 billion in funding authorized by the Comprehensive Transportation Funding and Reform Act of 2007;
- Increases future transportation funding for Northern Virginia and Hampton Roads by dedicating a portion of growth in existing revenue sources;
- Improves the Public Private Transportation Act of 1995, providing a streamlined process to expedite eligible projects, including the Hampton Roads Bridge Tunnel; and
- Constitutionally secures the Transportation Trust Fund.

Major provisions of the legislative package are included in [House Bill 1579](#) that expands a similar plan approved by the House of Delegates during last year’s special session on transportation. Other key components of this year’s transportation package are [House Bill 2066](#), [House Bill 2079](#), and [House Joint Resolution 620](#).

“In proposing this practical solution to the transportation challenges of Virginia’s most congested regions, House Republicans are again demonstrating their commitment to improving our transportation infrastructure,” said Speaker Howell. “Combined with the ability to issue \$570 million in bonds authorized as part of the \$3 billion package I patroned in 2007, this package positions Virginia to make significant progress in delivering a 21st century network of roads, rail and transit. This transportation infrastructure funding plan, in partnership with efforts on the federal level and through the private sector, will stimulate our economy, create jobs and enhance mobility across the Commonwealth.”

In 2007, the General Assembly passed and Governor Kaine signed Speaker Howell’s [House Bill 3202](#), which dedicated new and existing revenue for statewide transportation needs, implemented overdue VDOT reforms, granted expanded tools for localities to combat sprawl and, for the first time, tied land use and

transportation decisions. Part of that landmark legislation authorized the issuance of \$3 billion in bonds to highway, rail and transit projects. With the successful resolution of legal challenges and the conclusion of prior debt obligations, the first issuance of \$570 million is on schedule to be released during Fiscal Year 2010 which begins July 1, 2009. The infusion of these funds will jump-start transportation projects across Virginia, improving transportation and providing economic stimulus.

[House Bill 1579](#), patroned by Delegate Oder, dedicates a portion of future revenue growth from economic activity in regions of the Commonwealth with major import and export activity to regional transportation projects. Specifically, the plan calls for:

- 30% of future growth from the corporate and individual income taxes and sales and use tax in Planning District 8 to the Northern Virginia Transportation Authority to fund important regional road, rail and transit projects. The plan allows for the generation of up to \$600 million annually in new funding for regional transportation initiatives.
- 30% of future growth from revenues generated by the economic engine of the ports in Hampton Roads for local and regional projects determined by the Hampton Roads Metropolitan Planning Organization. The plan allows for the generation of up to \$300 million annually in new funding for regional transportation items.
- 30% of future growth from revenues generated by existing and future ports in Front Royal, Richmond and Ellison. The plan allows for the generation of up to \$50 million annually for Staunton, Richmond, and Salem VDOT Districts, respectively, for transportation projects selected by the Commonwealth Transportation Board.

“Like businesses, Virginia needs to prudently reinvest in capital infrastructure projects to ensure long-term economic growth,” noted Delegate Oder, Vice-Chairman of the House Transportation Committee and patron of [House Joint Resolution 620](#) to lock up the Transportation Trust Fund from raids for non-transportation purposes. “House Republicans are offering the only solution this session that utilizes this responsible approach to addressing our transportation challenges. As our economic engines in the Commonwealth expand and grow, as we anticipate with our ports and business activity, our most congested regions should be able to capture a portion of that future revenue to build the infrastructure necessary to sustain and maximize ongoing economic prosperity. And, Virginians should be confident that funds intended for transportation improvements are exclusively reserved for that purpose.”

“Our plan allows areas like mine in Northern Virginia to keep a piece of the money generated here to stay here to help solve our transportation problems,” remarked Delegate Albo, a member of the Northern Virginia Transportation Commission. “Families in my district are stuck in traffic every day and business cannot move goods and services in a timely manner. This plan would directly address those issues by reducing congestion, increasing safety, and creating jobs. I am hopeful that all delegates and senators representing congested regions and beyond will vote for this common-sense transportation solution that allows us to reinvest in our infrastructure.”

Delegate Hamilton’s legislation, [House Bill 2066](#), streamlines and improves the provisions of the Public-Private Transportation Act of 1995. The bill would result in an increased number of opportunities for public-private transportation projects in Virginia as well as hasten the process of bringing those projects to fruition. Delegate Hamilton’s bill and Delegate Oder’s [House Bill 2079](#) include provisions to expedite improvements and expansion of two projects critical to Hampton Roads, the Downtown Tunnel/Midtown Tunnel/MLK Extension project and the Hampton Roads Bridge Tunnel.

“House Republicans understand the need for practical and viable solutions to address Virginia's transportation problems,” concluded Delegate Hamilton. “Utilizing future tax revenues generated from economic growth, improving efficiencies that encourage public-private partnerships, and protecting transportation funding for transportation-only uses are common sense initiatives that distinguish us from the failed tax and spend and inefficient policies of the past.”