

**COMMISSION TO STUDY THE DESIRABILITY AND
FEASIBILITY OF THE ACQUISITION OF
WASHINGTON NATIONAL AND
DULLES INTERNATIONAL AIRPORTS**

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**REPORT OF THE
COMMISSION**

To

THE GOVERNOR

And

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF VIRGINIA



Senate Document No. 15

**COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA
Department of Purchases and Supply
Richmond
1976**

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Laurens Sartoris
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Constance D. Sprouse

**Report of the
Commission to Study the Desirability and
Feasibility of the Acquisition of
Washington National and Dulles International Airports
To
The Governor and the General Assembly of Virginia
Richmond, Virginia
December, 1975**

To: Honorable Mills E. Godwin, Jr., Governor of Virginia

And

The General Assembly of Virginia

I. INTRODUCTION

This is the fourth report made by the Commission originally created pursuant to Senate Joint Resolution No. 15 of 1971 and continued by Senate Joint Resolution No. 12 of 1972, Senate Joint Resolution No. 131 of 1973 and Senate Joint Resolution No. 6 of 1974. Initially the Commission was created in response to the annual budget message to the Congress by the President of the United States. Included in the message was the proposal that the Dulles International and Washington National Airports be sold in order to promote economy in the operation of the federal government. At that time there existed no clearly defined guidelines as to the basis on which the ownership of these airports would be transferred; however, it was thought that a possibility of Virginia's coming into possession of these two tremendous transportation facilities might be realized. The text of the study directive under which the Commission is currently operating is as follows:

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 6

Continuing the Commission to Study the Desirability and Feasibility of the Acquisition of the Washington National and Dulles International Airports.

WHEREAS, the General Assembly by resolution in nineteen hundred seventy-one did create the Commission to Study the Desirability and Feasibility of the Acquisition of the Washington National and Dulles International Airports by the Commonwealth; and

WHEREAS, such Commission was continued in existence pursuant to the terms of Senate Joint Resolution No. 131 of nineteen hundred seventy-three to pursue further its study of the desirability and feasibility of the acquisition of such airports; and

WHEREAS, the state of affairs in Washington is such that it has been impossible for the Commission to formulate ultimate conclusions to be presented to the Governor and this General Assembly; and

WHEREAS, there are indications that the federal administration's plans to dispose of the National Capital Airports may be advanced during the upcoming session of the Congress; and

WHEREAS, it is vital that the best interests of the Commonwealth be protected through the efforts of persons familiar with the problems at hand and able to communicate with appropriate governmental agencies and persons in the nation's capital; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the Senate of Virginia, the House of Delegates concurring, That the Commission created by Senate Joint Resolution No. 15 of nineteen hundred seventy-one and continued by Senate Joint Resolution No. 12 of nineteen hundred seventy-two and Senate Joint Resolution No. 131 of nineteen hundred seventy-three be continued as the Commission to Study the Desirability and Feasibility of the Acquisition of the Washington National and Dulles International Airports. The present members shall continue as members of the Commission; provided, that if any member be unwilling or unable to serve, or for any other reason a vacancy occurs, his successor shall be appointed by the Privileges and Elections Committee of the Senate from the membership of the Senate or the Speaker of the House of Delegates from the membership thereof, in turn as such vacancies may occur; and be it

RESOLVED, FURTHER, That such Commission shall continue its study of the desirability and feasibility of the Commonwealth's acquiring and operating the Dulles International Airport and the Washington National Airport and represent the best interests of the Commonwealth in the nation's capital before any person, agency or congressional committee considering or having influence over matters relating to the disposition of such airports; and be it

RESOLVED, FINALLY, That the members of the Commission shall receive a per diem allowance of thirty-five dollars for each day or any part thereof devoted to their duties as members of the Commission and in addition shall be reimbursed for their actual and necessary expenses incurred in the performance of their duties, for which, and for such professional and secretarial services as may be requisite, there is hereby appropriated from the contingent fund of the General Assembly a sum sufficient, not to exceed five thousand dollars.

The Commission shall complete its study and report to the Governor and the General Assembly not later than September one, nineteen hundred seventy-five.

Pursuant to the terms of the resolution, the membership of the Commission was as follows: Martin L. Schnider, President, Northern Virginia Savings and Loan Association, Arlington, and Marvin M. Stanley, Associate Dean, School of Business Administration, College of William and Mary, Williamsburg, were members appointed by the Governor. The Speaker of the House of Delegates appointed Joseph R. Ambrose, Professor of Government, Christopher Newport College, Gloucester Point; Allen H. Harrison, Jr., Attorney at Law, Arlington; Delegate Dorothy McDiarmid, Vienna; Delegate Stanley A. Owens, Sr., Manassas; and, Delegate James M. Thomson, Alexandria. Those appointed by the President of the Senate were Senator Leroy S. Bendheim, Alexandria; Senator Adelard L. Brault, Fairfax; Irby N. Hollans, Jr., Executive Director, Optical Wholesalers Association, Fairfax; and, B. W. Spiller, President, WCVE-TV, Richmond.

The Commission elected Senator Brault to serve as Chairman and Mr. Owens to serve as Vice-Chairman. The Virginia Advisory Legislative Council and the Division of Legislative Services made staff and facilities available to carry out the study; Laurens Sartoris and Constance Sprouse being assigned to assist the members of the study group.

During the first year of this study, the Commission, in awareness of the complexity of the problems before it, sought and received the assistance of financial experts in the Division of State Planning and Community Affairs. It was deduced that it might be financially feasible for the Commonwealth to acquire and successfully operate the National Capital Airports. In August of 1972 a bill for the administration's proposal for the disposition of the airports was introduced by Representative Gerald Ford. The 1973 continuation of the Commission was based on the adjournment of Congress in 1972 leaving the status of the Ford bill uncertain. In 1973 the Ford bill died in committee and a subsequent bill for disposition of the airports was introduced by Representative Gude. This bill also died in committee.

The Commission has again been hampered in its study by the unwillingness of the Federal Aviation Administration or any other federal agency to divulge plans for the disposition of the airports. In addition, there have been indications in Washington that the Federal Aviation Administration is reconsidering the original \$105 million book value of the airports. If this figure is substantially changed, the impact of the study conducted by the Division of State Planning and Community Affairs would have to be reassessed.

II. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Commission should be continued again by appropriate action of the General Assembly in order that it may act on behalf of the Commonwealth to the events which will affect the disposition of the Metropolitan Washington Airport Services (formerly National Capital Airports).

III. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

Thus far congressional action has been motivated to retain the airports while the administration, in particular the Federal Aviation Administration, has been motivated to dispose of the bureaucracy of the airports. As the airports and their role in the economic future of the Commonwealth are extremely significant, the interest of the Commonwealth in these matters has been and should be continued.

Serious developments in the past have placed the disposition of the airports in a situation where Virginia would have been unable to control and maintain the administration of the airports in the interests of the Commonwealth. Mr. Gude's proposal, H.R. 5590, provided for the acquisition and operation of Dulles International and Washington National and Baltimore-Washington International Airports (formerly Friendship International Airport) by the Washington Metropolitan Transit Authority. The enactment of such legislation by the Congress would have placed the Commonwealth at a serious disadvantage since it does not have controlling interest in this tri-state organization. In seeking to protect the interest of the Commonwealth, the Commission unanimously opposed this bill.

The solution to the disposition of the airports remains controversial. The Commission has developed its knowledge and expertise by representing the Commonwealth's interests thus far. Therefore, the Commission strongly recommends that it be continued in order to maintain its associations with the Federal Aviation Administration and members of the Congress on behalf of the Commonwealth and to protect the Commonwealth's interest in these facilities.

Appended to this report is a resolution, whose passage by the General Assembly we urge, by which the continuation of the Commission will be effected.

Respectfully submitted,

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Adelard L. Brault, Chairman

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Stanley A. Owens, Sr., Vice Chairman

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Leroy S. Bendheim

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Allen H. Harrison, Jr.

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Irby N. Hollans, Jr.

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Dorothy McDiarmid

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Martin L. Schnider

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B. W. Spiller

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Marvin M. Stanley

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James M. Thomson

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO.

Continuing the Commission to Study the Desirability and Feasibility of the Acquisition of the Washington National and Dulles International Airports, and to allocate funds.

WHEREAS, the General Assembly by resolution in nineteen hundred seventy-one did create the Commission to Study the Desirability and Feasibility of the Acquisition of the Washington National and Dulles International Airports by the Commonwealth; and

WHEREAS, such Commission was continued in existence pursuant to the terms of Senate Joint Resolution No. 6 of nineteen hundred seventy-four to pursue further its study of the desirability and feasibility of the acquisition of such airports; and

WHEREAS, the state of affairs in Washington is such that it has been impossible for the Commission to formulate ultimate conclusions to be presented to the Governor and this General Assembly; and

WHEREAS, there are indications that the federal administration's plans to dispose of the National Capital Airports may be advanced during the upcoming session of the Congress; and

WHEREAS, it is vital that the best interests of the Commonwealth be protected through the efforts of persons familiar with the problems at hand and able to communicate with appropriate governmental agencies and persons in the nation's capital; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the Senate of Virginia, the House of Delegates concurring, That the Commission created by Senate Joint Resolution No. 15 of nineteen hundred seventy-one and continued by Senate Joint Resolution No. 12 of nineteen hundred seventy-two, Senate Joint Resolution No. 131 of nineteen hundred seventy-three and Senate Joint Resolution No. 6 of nineteen hundred seventy-four be continued as the Commission to Study the Desirability and Feasibility of the Acquisition of the Washington National and Dulles International Airports. The present members shall continue as members of the Commission; provided, that if any member be unwilling or unable to serve, or for any other reason a vacancy occur, his successor shall be appointed by the Privileges and Elections Committee of the Senate from the membership of the Senate or the Speaker of the House of Delegates from the membership thereof, in turn as such vacancies may occur; and be it

RESOLVED, FURTHER, That such Commission shall continue its study of the desirability and feasibility of the Commonwealth's acquiring and operating the Dulles International Airport and the Washington National Airport and represent the best interests of the Commonwealth in the nation's capital before any person, agency or

congressional committee considering or having influence over matters relating to the disposition of such airports; and be it

RESOLVED, FINALLY, That the members of the Commission shall receive a per diem allowance of thirty-five dollars for each day or any part thereof devoted to their duties as members of the Commission and in addition shall be reimbursed for their actual and necessary expenses incurred in the performance of their duties, for which, and for such professional and secretarial services as may be requisite, there is hereby allocated from the general appropriation to the General Assembly a sum sufficient, not to exceed five thousand dollars.

The Commission shall complete its study and report to the Governor and the General Assembly not later than December one, nineteen hundred seventy-seven.

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