

**REPORT OF THE
DULLES INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT
DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
TO
THE GOVERNOR
AND
GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF VIRGINIA**



SENATE DOCUMENT NO. 26

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EXECUTIVE DIGEST

The Dulles International Airport Development Commission finds that its development and promotion functions need to be performed on a more permanent basis. The recent creation of an executive branch Department of Aviation, furthermore, has provided an appropriate institutional locus for these functions. Through discussions including the Dulles Commission's Chairman the Virginia Secretary of Transportation, and representatives of the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), an agreement has been reached whereby the Federal Aviation Administration will provide office space at Dulles Airport for an extension office for the Department of Aviation's Air Service Development Division to carry on functions hitherto vested in the Dulles Commission.

The Secretary of Transportation anticipates that the office will require no new appropriation of funds by the General Assembly. The Dulles Commission feels the functions of the office can be adequately guided by members of the Virginia Aviation Commission, who have been selected by the Governor to represent geographic areas of the Commonwealth and provide advice to the Governor, the Secretary of Transportation, and the Department regarding the aeronautical needs of the areas that they represent .

With its functions thus transferred to an executive branch agency, the Dulles Commission recommends that the Commission be formally disbanded by the 1980 General Assembly.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Commission recommends to the Governor and General Assembly that:

1. The Dulles International Airport Development be discontinued;
2. The various promotion and advocacy functions heitherto performed by the Dulles International Airport Development Commission be assumed by the Virginia Department of Aviation's Air Service Development Division and be carried out through an extension office of this Division located at Dulles International Airport;
3. The Virginia Air Service Development Division's extension office be specifically charged with the responsibility to:
 - a. Assist in the development of Dulles International Airport as a domestic and international gateway that can benefit all Virginia communities.
 - b. Encourage and promote improved air service to all Virginia airports as directed by the Department of Aviation,
 - c. Encourage commuter air carriers and regular air carriers to shift their services to Dulles Airport so that Washington National Airport is no longer the critical connecting hub for Virginia communities,
 - d. Insure that Washington National remains open to Virginia communities as a destination terminal,
 - e. Support ground access improvements to Dulles International Airport,
 - f. Support the redesignation of Dulles International Airport as Washington Dulles International Airport, and
 - g. Support the Federal Aviation Administration policy restricting the use of the Dulles Airport access road to airport traffic.

FINDINGS

1. The promotion and advocacy functions performed by the Dulles International Airport Development Commission are no less numerous and no less crucial to the health of Virginia aviation now than they were when the Commission was created in 1968. In fact, these functions have become so important – not only to Virginia aviation, but to a balanced transportation system as a whole – that they require full-time year-round attention: attention which a legislative branch study-and-recommendation body is not ideally suited to provide. Responsibility for these promotion and advocacy functions can more appropriately and productively be vested in an executive branch agency.

2. Creation by the 1979 General Assembly of a Department of Aviation has provided a logical executive branch agency to which the functions of the present Dulles International Airport Development Commission may be transferred. The Department has created within it an Air Service Development Division. One of the sections of this Division will be an extension office located at Dulles International Airport in space provided by the Federal Aviation Administration. The office can serve as the ideal locus for activities specifically related to Dulles International Airport.

3. Certain concerns of the Dulles International Airport Development Commission will remain of particular significance for the immediate future. In transferring the functions from the Commission to the extension office, special care should be taken that no momentum behind these projects be lost.

The extension office of the Air Service Development Division should be specifically charged with the responsibility to:

- a. Assist in the Development of Dulles International Airport to its full potential as a domestic and international gateway that can benefit all Virginia communities,
- b. Encourage and promote improved air service to all Virginia airports as directed by the Department of Aviation.
- c. Encourage commuter air carriers and regular air carriers to shift their services to Dulles Airport so that Washington National Airport is no longer the critical connecting hub for Virginia communities,
- d. Insure that Washington National remains open to Virginia Communities as a destination terminal,
- e. Support ground access improvements to Dulles International Airport,
- f. Support the redesignation of Dulles International Airport as Washington/Dulles International Airport, and
- g. Support the Federal Aviation Administration policy restricting the use of the Dulles Airport access road to airport traffic.

The Commission has been working cooperatively with Congressman Joseph Fisher's office, with the Federal Aviation Administration, and with the Virginia Department of Highways and Transportation on the first three of these; the fifth item can usefully be pursued in cooperation with the Virginia State Travel Service.

4. Much of the success which the Dulles International Airport Development Commission has enjoyed has been made possible through its nonlegislative members and through contact with other interested citizens outside government. The continued success of the Commission's efforts to improve Dulles International Airport will be assured through guidance provided by the Virginia Aviation Commission and by citizen groups such as the Committee for Dulles. Their interest and involvement in the efforts of the Department of Aviation's Air Service Development Division would serve as a means of institutionalizing and preserving this link between government and the citizenry.

BACKGROUND

Virginia is unique among the 50 states in that two major airports located within its borders, Washington National Airport and Dulles International Airport, are owned and operated by the United States government. Continued federal control of these two airports has insulated these facilities from local and State authorities and frustrated efforts to fully include them in transportation and economic development and planning.

By 1968 the Virginia General Assembly had become concerned over the relative under-utilization of Dulles International Airport as compared to the relative over-utilization of Washington National Airport. Increased use of Dulles Airport and its development as a "gateway" both to the United States and to Virginia could both serve as a stimulus to Virginia's aviation industry and have a positive impact on other aspects of the economy of the Commonwealth as well. The 1968 Virginia General Assembly created the Dulles International Airport Development Commission both to promote the Airport as a Virginia economic asset and to serve as a counterweight to efforts of other states to promote airports in their jurisdictions – often at the expense of Dulles Airport.

Since its creation, the Dulles Commission has taken the view that acquisition of Washington National and Dulles International Airports by the Commonwealth is both desirable and economically feasible. The Dulles Commission supported efforts of the Commission to Study the Desirability and Feasibility of Acquisition of Dulles International Airport and Washington National Airport (hereinafter referred to as the Airports Acquisition Commission) to arrange for the sale of these airports to Virginia. As of this writing though, airports acquisition projects have been frustrated by the unwillingness of the Congress to sell the properties. (For a more comprehensive review of the airports acquisition issue, see Senate Document 11 of 1972, "Report of the Commission to Study the Desirability and Feasibility of Acquisition of Dulles International Airport and Washington National Airport by the Commonwealth.")

In the years since its creation, the Dulles Commission has occupied itself with issues large and small, often acting as an advocate on behalf of the Airport not only before federal agencies, but also before local and State government and nongovernmental entities as well. The Commission has lobbied for improvement of customs service, expansion of sewer facilities, increases in the number of "super-saver" and other reduced-rate flights to Dulles Airport, improvement of road facilities serving Dulles airport's environs (completion of Interstate Route 66, and construction of a toll road parallel to the present Dulles Airport Access Road), preservation of the Dulles Airport Access Road as a congestion-free means of access to the Airport for airport-bound traffic, reduction of charges made for telephone service at Dulles Airport, transfer of connecting-flight traffic from Washington National to Dulles International Airport, and change of the name of Dulles International Airport to Washington/Dulles International Airport.

The absence of any other agency – State, federal, local, regional – to carry on the Dulles Commission's promotion and advocacy functions caused the General Assembly to extend the mandate of the Commission in 1970 (House Joint Resolution 90), in 1972 (Senate Joint Resolution 32), in 1974 (House Joint Resolution No. 22), in 1976 (Senate Joint Resolution 6, and 1978 (Senate Joint Resolution 10, See Appendix II). The persistence of a need for the performance of the Dulles Commission's functions has pointed to the desirability of the vesting of those functions in a permanent State agency. (For a biennial account of the Commission's work, see its report to the Governor and General Assembly: Senate Document 9 of 1970, House Document 18 of 1972, Senate Document 13 of 1974, House Document 12 of 1976, and Senate Document 9 of 1978.)

RECENT COMMISSION ACTIVITIES

Recent activities of the Commission show a not inconsiderable continuity from earlier years. Most notably, issues of utility service to Dulles Airport, restrictions on traffic using the Dulles Airport Access Road, and change of Dulles Airports' official designation still figure prominently on its agenda.

With the cooperative assistance of the Commission, the State Corporation Commission and local telephone companies were persuaded to reduce charges for telephone service at Dulles Airport by about fifty percent. This reduction in the cost of doing business at the Airport cannot fail to have a beneficial effect on airlines serving Dulles.

The 1979 General Assembly's passage of legislation permitting the issuance of bonds to finance

the construction of a toll road paralleling the Dulles Access Road comported well with long-standing Commission concerns that Dulles-area commuter traffic be accommodated without abandoning the principle that use of the Dulles Access Road be restricted to airport-bound traffic. The Commission remains concerned that plans of the FAA to open the Access Road to 4-passenger carpool vehicles not be used as device to begin the process of removal of all access restrictions. In the future, the Commission feels, care must be taken, especially in the time before the opening of the toll facility, that exceptions granted for carpools and commuter buses not be expanded indiscriminately.

The Commission has long supported the official adoption by the FAA of the designation Washington/Dulles International Airport in place of the present Dulles International Airport. The Washington/Dulles term has long been routinely used by airline personnel answering telephones at Dulles Airport, and serves both to reduce confusion among persons calling the airport and also to more closely link Dulles Airport with air service to the Washington, D.C., area in the public mind.

Newer Issues

The current energy shortage and the efforts of the federal government to deregulate commercial aviation have had significant short-term impacts on Dulles Airport. What these impacts may be in the long-term is difficult to foresee at the present.

Aviation fuel costs have been rising dramatically. This fact, coupled with aviation deregulation, has caused airlines to take a closer-than-ever look at unprofitable or marginally profitable flights serving Dulles Airport. Yet even while Dulles service is cut, significant reductions at National Airport are unobservable. The task of persuading air carriers to translocate their service from National to Dulles becomes thus simultaneously more urgent and more formidable.

The Commission once again heard testimony that at least 50 percent of all airline passengers flying to Washington are actually en route to other destinations. They only land in Washington because of their need to meet connecting flights. So long as the vast bulk of these connecting flights depart not from Dulles but from Washington National Airport, even many long-haul carriers will be reluctant to translocate from Washington National to Dulles. This issue may not be new, but the impact of rising fuel costs and the economic pressures brought about by deregulation are new and have only served to exacerbate an old problem.

New Opportunities

The creation by the 1979 General Assembly of a Virginia Department of Aviation (to which the aviation responsibilities formerly vested in the State Corporation Commission were transferred) has presented the Commonwealth with a new institutional possibility for dealing with the Dulles Airport situation. The Department of Aviation has the advantages (which the present Dulles Commission lacks) of being a permanent, on-going entity (not requiring periodic General Assembly renewal, as in the case of the Dulles Commission) with a more-or-less predictable biennial appropriation, and with a responsibility for Virginia aviation as a whole – an effort in which rationalization of the use of Dulles Airport can surely play a major part.

Conversations between the Dulles Commission's Chairman and the Virginia Secretary of Transportation and the Administration of the FAA have produced plans to create an Air Service Development Office at Dulles Airport. This Office will be staffed by personnel from the Virginia Department of Aviation's Air Service Development Division and will be located at Dulles Airport in space made available without charge by the FAA. At present it is anticipated that the staffing and operation of the office will require no additional appropriation of funds by the General Assembly.

The creation of an Air Service Development Office will provide the Commonwealth with its first on-going physical presence at Dulles Airport. Office personnel will be able to acquaint themselves with the real needs and potential of Dulles Airport, and, by virtue of this familiarity and the Office's proximity to FAA offices, be able to bring these needs and potential to the FAA's attention.

The Air Service Development Office also has the potential of serving an instrument for the promotion of Dulles Airport as an international air gateway to Virginia by combining private efforts with the resources of the Virginia State Travel Service to seek the opening of "skytrain" service between Europe and Dulles Airport. This project is but one illustration of how the office can serve as a focus for various Dulles-related promotion and development efforts of other State agencies and nongovernmental entities.

With the creation of a development office at Dulles Airport, there no longer appears to be any need to continue the operation of the Dulles International Airport Development Commission. The development office is capable of carrying on all the Commission's functions.

Respectfully submitted,

Adelard L. Brault (Chairman)
George E. Allen, Jr. (Vice Chairman)
Floyd C. Bagley
Earl E. Bell
Vincent F. Callahan, Jr.
Charles J. Colgan
W. Calvin Falwell
Robert C. Fitzgerald
Richard R. G. Hobson
Willard G. Plentl
Charles L. Waddell

APPENDIX I.

Recommended Legislation

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO.....

Abolishing the Dulles International Airport Development Commission.

WHEREAS, the 1968 Virginia General Assembly created the Dulles International Airport Development Commission to provide an institutional focus through which the Commonwealth could take part in efforts to develop the economic potential of Dulles International Airport as a major commercial gateway to the Commonwealth and to the nation; and

WHEREAS, since its creation, the mandate of the Dulles International Airport Development Commission has been periodically renewed by the General Assembly; and

WHEREAS, though the Dulles International Airport Development Commission has been able to assist the growth of Dulles International Airport in many ways, its status as a nonpermanent, legislative study and advisory panel has prevented its serving the Commonwealth and Virginia aviation to the extent possible through a permanent agency; and

WHEREAS, with the creation by the 1979 General Assembly of a Department of Aviation reporting to the Secretary of Transportation, Virginia has been provided with an institutional alternative to the Dulles International Airport Development Commission through which the Commission's development and promotion functions may be carried on in a more permanent, long-range basis; and

WHEREAS, an office reporting to the Air Service Development Division will be established at Dulles International Airport to assist in the growth of this facility as a major commercial gateway to Virginia and the nation, and to assist in the development of Dulles Airport as a major hub in providing air services in support of other Virginia airports; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the Senate of Virginia, the House of Delegates concurring, That the Dulles International Airport Development Commission, having for eleven years promoted the economic and commercial advancement of Dulles International Airport, and having been, in large measure, superceded by the creation of the Virginia Department of Aviation, is hereby abolished.

APPENDIX II.

Resolution Authorizing Present Study

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 10

(1978)

Continuing the Dulles International Airport Development Commission; allocating funds therefor.

WHEREAS, the nineteen hundred sixty-eight General Assembly by House Joint Resolution Number 16 created the Dulles International Airport Development Commission to further the development of Dulles International Airport to its fullest potential; and

WHEREAS, the General Assembly has recognized the contributions of the Commission to the Commonwealth by extending the life of this Commission since that time, most recently through the adoption of Senate Joint Resolution Number 6 of the nineteen seventy-six Session; and

WHEREAS, the activities of the Commission to promote the interests of Dulles International Airport and thereby the Commonwealth have been pursued in a highly successful fashion at little cost to the Commonwealth; and

WHEREAS, the continued encouragement and promotion of the Dulles International Airport is essential to its growth and of economic benefit to the entire Commonwealth; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the Senate of Virginia, the house of Delegates concurring, That the Dulles International Airport is again continued in existence. The present members shall continue to serve as members; provided, however, 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 same body that made the original appointment. The Commission shall engage in any activity or project designed to promote the Dulles International Airport and shall continue to represent the interests of the Commonwealth in the Dulles International Airport as they may arise before any and all federal and State agencies.

The Commission is authorized to accept and expend grants and contributions of money for any activity authorized by this Resolution to benefit the Dulles International Airport.

No later than September one, nineteen hundred eighty, the Commission shall make a report of its activities to the Governor and the General Assembly.

The members of the Commission shall receive no compensation for their services but shall be paid their necessary expenses incurred in the performance of their duties for the Commission, for which and for the purposes of carrying out their charge there is hereby allocated to the General Assembly a sum sufficient not to exceed ten thousand dollars.

APPENDIX III

Current Commission Members

Adelard L. Brault (Chairman)
George B. Allen, Jr. (Vice Chairman)
Floyd C. Bagley
Earl E. Bell
Vincent F. Callahan, Jr.
Charles J. Colgan
W. Calvin Falwell
Robert C. Fitzgerald
Richard R. G. Hobson
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