

**REPORT OF THE  
VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION'S  
RESPONSE TO HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 5**

**Feasibility And Desirability  
of Providing Certain  
Improvements to Ferry  
Service Between  
Jamestown and Scotland**

**TO THE GOVERNOR AND  
THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF VIRGINIA**



**House Document No. 16**

**COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA  
RICHMOND  
1989**



## Acknowledgments

The contributions of the Waverly Residency Office and Mike Tardy, Resident Engineer, are gratefully acknowledged. The contributions of both the Virginia Department of Tourism and the Virginia Department for the Visually Handicapped are also gratefully acknowledged.



## Introduction

House Resolution No. 5 of the 1988 General Assembly requests that the Virginia Department of Transportation, with the assistance of the State Division of Tourism, consider enhancements to the ferry service across the James River between Jamestown and Scotland. These enhancements include but are not limited to:

1. providing tasteful, nautically appropriate uniforms for boat crews and other persons involved in ferry operations;
2. showing brief tourist-oriented films on Virginia attractions;
3. installing telephones for the use of business travelers,
4. selling post cards and stamps and providing facilities for mailing cards and letters;
5. selling t-shirts, souvenirs, and various Virginia-made products;
6. selling refreshments during the river crossing or while travelers are waiting to cross the river;
7. installing kiosks for the distribution of pamphlets and informational brochures; and
8. installing coin operated telescopes so that travelers may more closely observe the scenic beauty of the historic James River.

The ferry service began on February 26, 1925 as a private venture. The Virginia Department of Transportation took over the operation in 1945 and has operated it continuously since. Service operates from 5:00 a.m. to 1.00 a.m. on weekdays. On weekends, service begins at 5:40 a.m. with the last trip at 12:30 a.m. from the Jamestown side. The average crossing time is 15 minutes.

In 1988 traffic varied from a low of 1,050 vehicles a day to a high of 2,800 vehicles a day. A single trip costs \$2.00. There is also a 20 trip commuter book available for \$5.00.

The Department operates four ferries. These are the Surry, Williamsburg, Virginia, and Jamestown. The Virginia and Jamestown are primarily older boats used as standbys. Approximately 80% of the trips are on the Surry and the Williamsburg and the enhancements discussed will be limited to these boats.

The remainder of this response addresses each enhancement listed in the House Resolution No. 5, as well as three additional enhancements proposed by the Department.

**Provide tasteful, nautically appropriate uniforms for boat crews and other persons involved in ferry operations**

The crews presently wear:

Captain: navy pants with white shirts.

Engineers: navy pants with light blue shirts.

Crew members and mates: light blue shirts and navy pants.

Toll collectors: navy pants and white shirts.

In addition everyone wears a baseball cap with the ferry logo or a VDOT logo. There is no insignia of rank presently being worn.

The benefits of new uniforms would be to:

1. provide a more nautical atmosphere;
2. allow officers to be more readily identified in case the public has questions; and
3. provide a higher standard of appearance since these personnel are representing the Commonwealth.

In order to change uniforms, there would be a one time additional charge of \$6,500 to cover such things as caps, insignia, belt buckles and any other new uniform items needed. More appropriate uniforms have been investigated and the following are proposed:

Captain:

White uniform and white military hat with insignia on hat and scrambled eggs on visor, military belt buckle, insignia on collar, metal name plate, navy blue tie and tie bar, and Captain's bars on shoulder. Male and female would wear identical uniforms except females would wear hats and ties similar to United States Navy dress ("Wave" type hat and abbreviated tie).

Mate:

White pants with light blue shirt, baseball cap with embroidered logo, military belt buckle, and insignia on collar. Male and female would wear identical uniforms.

Engineer:

All navy blue (pants and shirt), baseball cap with embroidered logo and scrambled eggs on visor, military belt buckle and insignia on collar. Male and female would wear identical uniforms.

Crew Member:

Light blue shirt and navy blue pants, military belt buckle and insignia. Male and female would wear identical uniforms.

Toll Collector:

White shirts with navy blue pants or skirt, military belt buckle and insignia and navy blue tie and tie bar.

In addition, all personnel will have a navy winter coat with embroidered shoulder patch and removable liner for warmer temperatures. This will be similar to the coat normally used by the Department's weigh parties. The Department's logo will be embroidered on one sleeve and all personnel will wear name tags.

Recommendation: The Department of Transportation should implement a plan that will result in the acquisition of new uniforms by April 1, 1989.

Show brief tourist-oriented films of Virginia attractions

The Virginia Division of Tourism can furnish copies of its 10 minute video on Virginia destinations and attractions. Video display monitors will be placed on the Surry and Williamsburg. These will be user-initiated and placed in vandalism resistant enclosures.

Recommendation: The Department of Transportation should install video viewers as discussed above by April 1, 1989.

Install telephones for the use of business travelers

There is presently a pay phone on the Surry side of the James River. This phone is located approximately 20 feet from the toll booth. The Jamestown side is unattended much of the time and this increases the possibility of vandalism, were phones to be installed. Within a quarter of a mile of the dock on the Jamestown side there are five outside pay telephones at the

Jamestown Beach Campground and an additional two at the Jamestown Festival Park. Access to those at the park is limited to the hours when the park is open; however, the others are available 24 hours a day. Exact usage of the phones is unknown; however, during a limited number of observations there never was more than one person waiting in line and most of the time the phone was available immediately.

Recommendation: The Department of Transportation should provide signs to identify existing phones by December 31, 1988. This way the public will be more aware of them, promoting better utilization. The Department should also monitor utilization to see if it increases to the point where there are waiting lines, and if this occurs, contact the telephone company to install additional phones.

**Sell t-shirts, souvenirs and various Virginia-made products**

**Sell post cards and stamps and provide facilities for mailing cards and letters**

The Department for the Visually Handicapped would have responsibility for selling these commodities. They do not believe the idea is feasible at the present time, due to security issues, lack of potential profit, and unfair competition for existing vendors. A copy of their report is attached as Appendix I. Further, the United States Postal Service is not willing to provide a collection box in this area. The United States Postal Service, Richmond, advised that they previously had a collection box at Jamestown Festival Park; however, the use did not justify keeping it in place.

Recommendation: The Department of Transportation should do nothing at the present time, but should reinvestigate within one year and see if it is more feasible at that time.

**Sell refreshments during the river crossing or while travelers are waiting to cross the river**

As the result of their investigations, the Department for the Visually Handicapped feels it would be feasible to install vending machines on the ferries. This would be done on the two ferries with the highest utilization, the Surry and the Williamsburg. Although selling stamps and post cards by vending machine is also possible, the Department for the Visually Handicapped feels this would be a low profit operation. Items such as this are not impulse purchases as is food.



Recommendation: In keeping with the procedures used for Interstate rest areas, the Department of Transportation should contact the Department for the Visually Handicapped to issue Request for Proposals for Vending Services. The Department should also evaluate the success of these services after the machines have been in place for one year.

**Install kiosks for the distribution of pamphlets and informational brochures**

The Department of Tourism feels the kiosks where literature would be available would be feasible. The kiosks would have to be in a weather proof enclosure and stocked and maintained by Department of Transportation personnel.

The costs of this enhancement would be approximately \$7,000 for each shelter plus an additional \$4,000 on the Surry side for pier improvements. However, the Department of Transportation does not recommend the kiosks, primarily for safety reasons. This would encourage pedestrian traffic on the piers. People would be returning to their cars at the same time that an arriving ferry would be discharging its cars. For most of its length the pier is only 19 feet wide and the possibility of an accident would increase because of the limited space and increased traffic.

Recommendation: The Department of Transportation should not install kiosks because of safety reasons.

**Install coin operated telescopes so that travelers may more closely observe the scenic beauty of the historic James River**

A source that may be willing to lease telescopes for use on the ferry has been located. A copy of their response is shown in Appendix II. This is the same vendor that the Department uses for the coin operated telescopes in the vicinity of the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel.

Recommendation: The Department of Transportation should determine if there are other potential vendors and then take action to have coin operated telescopes leased and installed by April 1, 1989.

### Other Enhancements

In addition to arranging for new uniforms, the placement of vending stands on the ferries, and the installation of coin operated telescopes, the Department of Transportation will also do the following:

1. Produce a map of the ferry crossing area. The map will show the main attractions and will also help identify objects visible in the telescope. The toll takers will be able to distribute the maps to anyone desiring them.
2. Place Virginia travel posters under heavy plexiglass in the ferry cabins. The Virginia Highway Map will also be put in the cabin area similar to the arrangement we now have in rest areas.
3. Provide more frequent repainting of the ferries to present a more pleasing appearance to the traveling public.

Appendix I

Response from the Department for the Visually Handicapped



**REPORT ON VENDING SITE**  
**FOR**  
**JAMESTOWN-SCOTLAND FERRY**

Introduction:

At the request of Mr. C. O. Leigh of the Virginia Department of Transportation, the Business Enterprises Division was requested to perform an analysis of possible vending sites at the Jamestown-Scotland Ferry. This request was in relation to House Resolution Number 5 which grants the Department of Transportation the privilege of developing such commercial activities to promote tourism on the ferry system.

In May of 1988, Mr. Tighe sent the Department a copy of the law as well as the Department of Transportation's background study which included traffic across the ferry during both the high traffic period and off-seasons.

In discussion with the Department of Transportation, the Business Enterprises' staff felt it was important to determine whether there may be other considerations to take into account; such as, private sector business which may feel unfair competition or whose presence in the area may risks any type of vending location by a state entity as unprofitable. When these elements were furnished for review and consideration, a site survey was planned for the staff of Business Enterprises to inspect the location at the Jamestown-Scotland Ferry.

Site Survey

On Tuesday, July 12, 1988, Mr. Harvey Leigh, General Manager of Business Opportunities for the Blind and Mr. David H. Kennedy, Assistant Deputy Commissioner for Business Facilities, were accompanied by a representative of Mr. Leigh's staff from the Department of Transportation. The survey included the immediate and adjacent areas of both the Jamestown and Surry (Scotland) side of the ferry.

Observations:

On the Jamestown side of the ferry system, the inspection team observed some usable space, approximately fifty meters before entering the causeway to the ferry. This area also contains an abandoned toll station along with an adjacent area which is privately owned and used for a recreational spot. The area in question was obviously heavily traveled and had quite a lot of litter and refuse around it. The toll area was heavily vandalized and obviously unused for sometime. It is evident that while this area is fairly well traveled, there exists no method of ensuring physical security anywhere in the immediate area. Other observations on the Jamestown side revealed the presence of a 7-11 Store and two campgrounds. These facilities remain open all year round and provide a range of vending articles

On the Scotland side, aside from the Virginia Department of Transportation's buildings located on the causeway built-up area, there exists an eating establishment called "The Store." This business is a combination snack bar/restaurant designed specifically to cater to the travelers using the ferry. There is very little space on the remaining area of the Scotland Wharf for consideration of a vending site development.

On the ferries - Williamsburg, Surry, and the back-up vessels, there exists space to install vending machines.

#### Recommendations:

Based upon the observations of the Business Enterprises' staff of the Virginia Department for the Visually Handicapped, the consideration for construction of any type of vending site at the entrance of the ferry is denied for the following reasons:

1. The area for consideration on the Jamestown side does not lend itself for consideration in vending souvenirs and refreshments due to its relative isolation. Further, the area presents problems in parking and physical security. A location of this nature could not support itself year round, and could not be relied upon to turn a profit for a vendor, either private or a Randolph-Sheppard operator.
2. The area surrounding the Scotland Wharf is unsuitable due to a lack of adequate space and the fact that a facility (The Store) is already in existence to provide the type of service requested in House Resolution Number 5. An attempt should be made with the proprietor of "The Store" to work with the Jamestown-Scotland Ferry to promote souvenirs and refreshments. Perhaps that facility could also assist in the provision of vending services on the vessels, i.e., bear responsibility for daily servicing of vending machines as well as providing a storage area for vending products.

As for vending products on the Jamestown-Scotland Ferry, our recommendation is that limited vending services occur on the Williamsburg, Surry, and Jamestown vessels. The products vended should be non-perishable packaged snacks, cookies, and pastries, as well as canned drinks or juices, much the same as the articles that are vended on the Interstate System.

Additionally, it is our recommendation that an Request for Proposals (RFP) be developed to provide for bids for commercial vendors in providing vending services on the ferry vessels. The RFP should reflect a trial period of 12 to 18 months to determine the feasibility of maintaining or extending services of this nature on the Jamestown-Scotland Ferry System.

#### Long Range Planning:

Assuming that vending packaged products on the vessels in the ferry system is successful, consideration should be made for the development of a kiosk on the docking facility on the Scotland side. If plans exist to overhaul the buildings on that area, an

operation may very well vend souvenirs and other items attractive to tourists visiting Virginia in the manner suggested by House Resolution Number 5. It is our opinion that a location must be established that the Department of Transportation can control in order for any venture of this nature to be successful.

It has been a pleasure to provide this consultation for the Department of Transportation and we look forward to providing this type of service again when requested to do so.





Appendix II

Response from Tower Optical Company





# THE TOWER OPTICAL CO., INC

MANUFACTURERS OF  
BAUSCH & LOMB BINOCULAR VIEWING MACHINES

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MAIN OFFICE & FACTORY P O. BOX 251 SOUTH NORWALK, CONN. 06856 TEL (203) 866-4535

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September 8, 1988

VA Dept. of Transportation  
1401 E. Broad St.  
Highway Dept. Annex  
Richmond, VA 23219

Attention: Pat Suarez, Director  
Office of Policy Management

Dear Pat:

Thanks very much for your recent phone call regarding an interest in our equipment.

Our machines are placed on a percentage split basis and not sold. Tower Optical supplies all equipment, effects installation and provides scheduled maintenance.

Before making a final decision/commitment, I would like to look over the four boats you have in mind. I'll be down in your neck of the woods in mid October and try to stop and check out the Scotland-Jamestown Ferry.

I've enclosed our brochure for your perusal. Thanks again for your interest in the service we provide.

Sincerely,

Bruce M. Bruchac

BMB:encls.



Appendix III

House Resolution 5  
1988 Session



# 1988 SESSION

LD2499468

## HOUSE RESOLUTION 5

Offered January 26, 1988

*Requesting certain improvements in ferry service between Jamestown and Scotland.*

Patrons—Grayson and Council

Referred to the Committee on Roads and Internal Navigation

WHEREAS, the Department of Transportation provides ferry service across the James River between Jamestown and Scotland; and

WHEREAS, this ferry service makes it possible for many residents of Surry, Isle of Wight, Sussex and Southampton Counties to commute daily to jobs in the Williamsburg and Newport News area; and

WHEREAS, this ferry service not only brings tourists to the attractions of Williamsburg, Jamestown, Bacon's Castle, and Smith's Fort, but also is a tourist attraction in its own right; and

WHEREAS, much more could be done to enhance the role of the Jamestown - Scotland ferry in Virginia's tourist industry both on board the ferry boats themselves and also at the ferry landing; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, That the Department of Transportation, with the assistance of the Division of Tourism of the Department of Economic Development, is requested to consider enhancements to the ferry service across the James River between Jamestown and Scotland, including but not limited to: (i) providing tasteful, nautically appropriate uniforms for boat crews and other persons involved in ferry operations; (ii) showing brief tourist-oriented films on Virginia attractions; (iii) installing telephones for the use of business travelers; (iv) selling post cards and stamps and providing facilities for mailing cards and letters; (v) selling t-shirts, souvenirs, and various Virginia-made products; (vi) selling refreshments during the river crossing or while travelers are waiting to cross the river; (vii) installing kiosks for the distribution of pamphlets and informational brochures; and (viii) installing coin-operated telescopes so that travelers may more closely observe the scenic beauty of the historic James River

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Appendix IV

Response from the Division of Tourism





# COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

*Department of Economic Development*

## DIVISION OF TOURISM

252 North Ninth Street, Suite 500

Richmond, Virginia 23219


Phone 86-2051

Telex 86-VA TOURISM UD

November 28, 1988

COMMUNICATIONS SECTION  
NOV 29 1988  
OFFICE

TO: Ray D. Pethtel, Commissioner  
Department of Transportation

FR: Patrick A. McMahon, Director   
Virginia Division of Tourism

REF: House Resolution 5 - Requesting certain improvements  
in ferry service between Jamestown and Scotland.

The following information is provided by the Virginia Division of Tourism relative to the consideration of tourism marketing enhancements to the ferry service across the James River between Jamestown and Scotland.

The Division of Tourism does not view the ferry as a primary source of tourism information to visitors from outside Virginia but rather as a form of a transportation tourist attraction. A major portion of the ridership is commuter while many of the tourists have selected the ferry based on information previously obtained from VDT Welcome Centers and local community/regional centers where a large variety of brochures and Virginia information is available.

It should be noted that today the tourist pre-plans much of his trip including reservations and attraction admissions. Therefore, he is not as prone to deviate and is much more cognizant of travel times and routes which he attempts to travel in the most efficient way possible.

However, the VDT is always interested in reaching any tourist to attempt to enhance their visit wherever possible. The following assistance by the VDT addresses the improvements listed in HR 5 plus several other ideas.

1. Tourist-oriented films

The Virginia Division of Tourism will furnish a copy of it's 10 minute video on Virginia destinations and attractions which could be shown onboard the ferry. Use of video is recommended over film due to limited space and required operation and maintenance of film equipment. Video equipment could be procured by the Department of Transportation that would require being turned on and off daily and would otherwise run automatically throughout the day without additional personnel involvement. Maintenance would be minor. During the study, the staff involved were able to identify locations in the ferry cabin where the equipment could be installed without using up passenger space.

The VDT could request additional video tapes from attractions in the area of the ferry to develop a library on the ferry. However, this would require additional crew involvement in changing tapes and due to the time the rider has on the ferry we feel that the 10 minute video mentioned above would be sufficient.

It should also be noted that in the spring, summer, and fall months the tourist-rider is more prone to remain outside to view the sights during the crossing than to spend time in the cabin area.

2. Installation of telephones for business travelers

Due to waiting time, the installation of pay phones on the loading piers and entrance areas would be helpful to business travelers as they wait to board the ferry. Phones on board the ferry might be considered, but this type of service is subject to a higher installation price. Most business travelers would not find the length of the trip to be that critical especially if phones were available prior to boarding and debarking from the ferry.

3. Installation of kiosks for the distribution of pamphlets and informational brochures

The VDT would recommend informational kiosks such as are now utilized at state reststops which have a map and pictures of key attractions of the area mounted on them.

Kiosks that would maintain pamphlets and informational brochures, especially for the area that the ferry serves, would have to be capable of holding at least 100 different types plus a sampling of brochures from other areas of the State - at least 50 different ones. Because there are no buildings to accommodate these, the kiosks would have to be weather-proofed and ferry staff would have to maintain inventories through attraction and destination contacts and keep racks filled. Should a facility for selling souvenirs, etc. be developed this could be function of that operation.

In looking at the possibility of onboard racks, we found space to be limited for the basic area requirement.

4. Installation of coin-operated telescopes to observe the scenic beauty

The VDT would hardly endorse this enhancement to the ferry as we observed great interest on the part of the tourist to want to get a closer look as they were crossing.

5. Selling of retail items and refreshments

If consideration was given to a retail souvenir or refreshments center, we would recommend that private sector concessionaires be sought to provide this service such as is done in national and state parks.

6. Onboard maps

We would recommend that a state highway map be mounted in a convenient location on the bulkhead of the ferry to assist people in assessing their location and route planning. The crew might have a supply of maps to hand out on request. The road map has become the most important travel tool to the tourist. In the State's Welcome Centers it is the most requested piece of information.

## 7. Computer Information Systems

Future consideration could be given to the development of a computer information unit to be installed on the ferry that would provide travel information and printouts to a traveler. The VDT has been evaluating such systems and has tested one, but for the time being has found it too costly to maintain. It is anticipated that the cost effectiveness will improve in the future and this type of information system will be utilized as a major travel information tool. It would be an excellent information tool for the ferry.

cc: The Honorable Vivian E. Watts  
Secretary of Transportation & Public Safety

The Honorable Curry A. Roberts  
Secretary of Economic Development

