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**Rodney W. Oliver**  
*Interim Executive Director*

ISO Certified: 9001  
Quality Management System -  
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**November 14, 2013**

Senate of Virginia  
Sen. Walter A. Stosch, Finance Committee  
Sen. Stephen D. Newman, Transportation Committee  
P.O. Box 396  
Richmond, Virginia 23218

General Assembly Building  
Del. Lacey E. Putney, Appropriations Committee  
Del. Joe T. May, Transportation Committee  
P.O. Box 406  
Richmond, Virginia 23218

RE: Budget Amendment Item 456 #1c – Virginia Port Authority, Suffolk Rail Study

Dear Chairmen Stosch, Newman, Putney, and May,

The enclosed report, titled Suffolk Rail Study, is provided in response to the referenced budget amendment that directs the Virginia Port Authority to identify potential funding sources and to provide a schedule to further study relocating the Commonwealth Rail Lines in Suffolk.

The Virginia Port Authority contact for this effort is Jeff Florin, at 757 683-2150, or at [jflorin@portofvirginia.com](mailto:jflorin@portofvirginia.com) if any additional information is needed.

Sincerely,

Rodney W. Oliver  
Interim Executive Director

## **Suffolk Rail Study**

IAW Virginia FY 2014-2015 Budget Amendment Item 456 #1c

### **Budget Bill Language**

*D. The Virginia Port Authority is directed to further analyze the necessary improvements identified in the study undertaken under contract by the Virginia Port Authority in 2010 regarding the Commonwealth Rail Line Safety Relocation Initiative in the City of Suffolk. Such study shall focus on the improvements needed to implement the aforementioned study and is intended to help address the impacts of port-related rail traffic in the City of Suffolk. The Virginia Port Authority shall work with the Virginia Department of Transportation and the Department of Rail and Public Transportation to identify the respective share of project costs that should be borne by each entity, recognizing that the rail project seeks to address adverse highway delays caused by rail traffic emanating from the Virginia Port Authority operated facilities. Such review shall assess the availability of Rail Enhancement Funding, Rail Preservation Funding, Railroad Rehabilitation and Improvement Financing, Transportation Innovation and Finance funding, Highway Safety Improvement Funding, Rail Industrial Access grants and Virginia Port Authority funding available to finance the critical improvements. The Authority shall submit a report to the Chairmen of the House Appropriations and Transportation Committees and the Senate Finance and Transportation Committees by November 15, 2013 outlining the potential funding sources and a proposed schedule of completion for the detailed study.*

### **Interpretation**

- Budget Item 456 #1c directs the Virginia Port Authority to further analyze the necessary improvements identified in a 2010 VPA study regarding the Commonwealth Rail Line Safety Relocation Initiative in the City of Suffolk.
  - Focus on the improvements needed to implement the 2010 Study
  - Intended to help address impacts of port-related rail traffic in the City of Suffolk
  - Identify the respective share of project costs that should be borne by each entity recognizing that the rail project seeks to address adverse highway delays caused by rail traffic emanating from the Virginia Port Authority operated facilities.
  - Assess the availability of funding sources to finance the critical improvements
- VPA submit this proposal to the State Legislature committees outlining the potential funding sources and proposed schedule for the detailed study.

### **Suffolk Rail Study Proposal**

In accordance with the directive above, the following study is proposed:

- Update the evaluation of the No Build, Improve Existing, and Alternative Routes 1-6 alternatives in the 2010 Study to reflect updated rail traffic conditions and considerations, including:
  - Daily Amtrak passenger service from Norfolk with potential growth to three daily round trips.
  - Any changes in bulk rail traffic (volume, origins, carriers, etc.)

- Pending developments at PMT and various private marine terminals that may affect rail volume.
- Changes to APMT and NIT rail traffic (volume, origins, carriers, etc.)
- Major site development in vicinity of identified improvements

**Deliverable:** Report Addendum

**Schedule:** 5 months

- Present Report Addendum to primary stakeholders (VDOT, DRPT, HRTPO, City of Suffolk, Norfolk Southern, CSX, CWRV) and seek consensus on which alternative should be studied further.

**Deliverable:** Formally identified Preferred Alternative

**Schedule:** 2 months

- Prepare follow-on study of preferred alternative:
  - Define the vision of the preferred alternative.
  - Define the projects required to implement the preferred alternative.
  - Identify project costs and benefits
  - Identify funding opportunities for each project
  - Develop a program for implementation (project sequence, priority, etc.)

**Deliverable:** Suffolk Rail Improvement Program Report (Pre-NEPA feasibility and concept level study)

**Schedule:** 6 months

Subsequent efforts (outside this study) include environmental impact reports, permitting, and design efforts to support executing the program.

### **Suffolk Rail Study Funding**

- VPA anticipates this study will cost approximately \$206,000.
- VPA recommends the study be funded via a grant from the Office of Intermodal Planning and Investment and submitted a request for funding in October 2013.
  - The study's scope and objective is consistent with the OIPI Multimodal Planning Grant Program objectives
  - The outcome of this study represents initiation of a major regional transportation program affecting road and rail networks, as well as passenger and freight rail service. The realignment may also provide opportunities to integrate bicycle and pedestrian planning if rail right-of-way abandonments are identified.
  - VPA generated rail traffic is a subset of the entire rail traffic within the area of study.

### **Current Status**

- Upon approval of the OIPI Grant, expected in November 2013, the study will take approximately 34 weeks with appropriate time for review by the City of Suffolk, the railroads, VDOT and other stakeholders.