



**NVTC Comments to the Transit Capital Revenue Advisory Board
June 16, 2016**

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Katherine A. Mattice

I am Kate Mattice, Executive Director of the Northern Virginia Transportation Commission, the transit commission that serves the counties of Fairfax, Arlington and Loudoun and the cities of Alexandria, Falls Church and Fairfax. Thank you, Mr. Chair, for the opportunity to comment on this important effort.

The Northern Virginia Transportation Commission has a vested interest in the legislative recommendations that emerge from the Revenue Advisory Board. Nowhere else in the Commonwealth does transit play as critical a role as it does in Northern Virginia. The Commonwealth's long-term commitment to funding our transit systems has fueled the economies of both the region and the state, providing a significant return on investment.

As a member of the Transit Service Delivery Advisory Committee, I have a great appreciation of the time and effort that each of you have devoted to finding new sources of funding to address the pending loss of more than \$130 million per year in state transit capital revenues. And, I recognize the challenges you face in both identifying replacement funds and prioritizing their allocation.

As you move into the final phase of your legislative mandate, I have three key messages that I would like to share on behalf of NVTC:

1) It is our firm belief that a statewide program should be supported by revenues generated at the state level. We know that the transit capital needs in Northern Virginia are great – we move more than 148 million transit riders each year; we provide access to more than 700,000 jobs; and, because of our transit network, we contribute more than \$600 million per year in income and sales tax to the Commonwealth's general fund.

What might be helpful for you to know is that Northern Virginia already contributes more than \$82 million per year in local and regional transit capital funding, the highest percentage of any district in the Commonwealth. We know our needs are high, but we also contribute a lot ourselves and know that we need the partnership of the Commonwealth to support our state of good repair and expansion needs. Bottom line: statewide funding must continue to be supported by statewide revenues.

2) We recognize the challenges of the legislative request to create a prioritization process. We support the Advisory Board's proposed approach to major expansion projects that mirrors the SmartScale program.

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However, for state of good repair investments – the bread and butter that keeps transit systems operating safely and reliably – we believe that the Revenue Advisory Board has gone further than is necessitated by the authorizing legislation in proposing a new and potentially burdensome administrative process for selecting state of good repair projects for funding.

In the authorizing language, the Revenue Advisory Board “shall develop a proposal to foster project-specific prioritization WITHIN the asset tiers” that were established by CTB in 2013. The current asset-based prioritization has only been in place for three years with positive results in how funding is allocated. We do not see that it’s “broken” so why is there a need to fix it?

Further, the Federal Transit Administration has recently implemented new regulations that require transit agencies to conduct transit asset management prioritization activities. Transit agencies across the Commonwealth are already putting these efforts in place. Why can we not let these requirements – along with the asset tiers – guide prioritization?

3) Finally, we ask that the Revenue Advisory Board and the General Assembly recognize that the needs for statewide transit capital do not obfuscate the additional investment needs of our Northern Virginia transit agencies. Both WMATA and VRE have identified additional capital needs that will require funding above and beyond what is being contemplated by the Revenue Advisory Board in its recommendations. As the General Assembly deliberates funding needs across the Commonwealth, we want to ensure that all needs are being addressed.

Once again, thank you for the opportunity to share NVTC’s perspectives on this effort. On behalf of the 800,000 + plus daily riders on the six bus systems, Metrorail and VRE commuter rail, I thank you for your hard work on this tough issue and look forward to continued collaboration.

§ 33.2-1843. Powers and duties of the Advisory Board.

The Transit Capital Project Revenue Advisory Board shall:

4. Develop a proposal to foster project-specific prioritization within the asset tiers of the tiered approach established by the Commonwealth Transportation Board for capital purposes based on asset need and anticipated state participation level and revenues, for which funding for the transit state of good repair program shall be allocated and distributed.