I-81 Freight Rail Study

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DRPT
Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation
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Prior I-81 Rail Studies

- HR–704 Desirability and Feasibility of Establishing Additional "Intermodal Transfer Facilities" – House Document 23 – Published 2001
- SJR-55 Potential for Shifting Virginia's Highway Traffic to Railroads – Senate Document 30 – Published 2001
- Northeast-Southwest-Midwest Corridor Marketing Study, "The I-81 Marketing Study"
  - Published 2003
- I-81 Tier I Draft Environmental Impact Statement
  - Published 2005

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General Assembly Directives

HB 1581

- Study I-81 for freight operating, ownership and truck competitive characteristics of the up to 500 miles outside of VA, including financial evaluation and potential funding mechanisms of identified improvements and the study of up to a 60 percent diversion of trucks off of I-81 onto the NS rail line.

Budget Bill Language

- Department of Transportation Section 442 A.2.a "…Such study shall include development of a feasibility plan to define the conditions that would be necessary to divert the maximum amount feasible of the long-haul, through-truck freight traffic to intermodal rail in the Interstate Route 81 Corridor."

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DRPT's Approach
to Meet these Directives

- **I-81 Freight Rail Study**
  - A study conducted by DRPT, in cooperation with
    - Secretary of Transportation's Office
    - Commonwealth's Multimodal Office
    - Norfolk Southern
    - Cambridge Systematics
    - Woodside Consulting
- **Resources**
  - NS will provide information via Woodside study
  - Multimodal Office will provide information via Cambridge services
- **Timeframe:** Fall 2006 - Summer 2007

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Study Components
Operating Characteristics

- Explores Shenandoah and Route 29 (Piedmont) rail corridors
- Extends at least 500 miles, including TN and PA
- Includes roll on/roll off and other rail technologies
- Achieves truck-competitive transit times
- Considers alternative ownership and operational options
- Considers the option of new rail ROW from Front Royal to Culpeper

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September 21, 2006

Study Components
Financial Evaluation

- Capital cost of upgrades and construction
- Operating cost for level of rail service needed to achieve truck competitive speed and reliability
- Comparative ROI analyses to achieve up to 60% truck diversion
- Project financing alternatives including SAFETEA-LU, FRA, bond financing and PPTA
- Truck direct/indirect cost savings from rail vs. road
- Analysis of future fuel price scenarios in determining diversion rates and capability to meet debt service and operate profitably
- Estimated construction schedule for completing track upgrades and grade separation including, but not limited to the rail corridor from Front Royal to Manassas

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Next Steps

- Public comments will be received and approval to advance the study will be requested of the CTB at their October meeting
- DRPT will keep the Rail Advisory Board and the CTB updated as the study proceeds
- Results available in summer 2007

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