

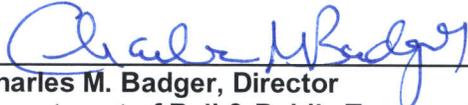
Richmond Hampton Roads Passenger Rail Project
Draft Program Environmental Impact Statement
and
Section 4(f) Evaluation

Pursuant to:

National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, (42 U.S.C. Section 4321 et seq.)
National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, Section 106 (16 U.S.C. Section 470f)
Department of Transportation Act of 1966, Section 4(f) (49 U.S.C. Section 303)

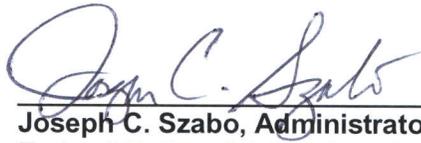
Prepared by:

US Department of Transportation (US DOT)
Federal Railroad Administration (FRA)
Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DRPT)



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Date: 11/24/09



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Abstract: This document describes and summarizes the environmental impacts of a proposed higher speed intercity passenger rail project connecting Richmond and the Hampton Roads region of Virginia with the Northeast Corridor and proposed Southeast High Speed Rail Corridor. Five alternatives are considered: 1) Status Quo Alternative; 2) No Action Alternative; and three Build Alternatives. The need to improve Virginia's transportation infrastructure is directly related to the population and employment growth and increased intercity travel demand expected over the next twenty years and beyond. Increased congestion and travel delays on the region's highway system and at airports caused by this growth are expected. The Build Alternatives examined a combination of conventional (79-mph) and higher speed (90 and 110-mph) rail passenger services with varying service frequencies over two different routes to alleviate predicted congestion. Potential environmental impacts of the Build Alternatives include increased noise and vibration, local traffic impacts associated with stations, impacts on historic properties and archeological sites, impacts on parks and recreation resources, impacts on sensitive biological resources and wetlands, and use of energy. Mitigation strategies are described to avoid or minimize potential impacts; such strategies would be further refined in project-level environmental review.

Comments on this Program EIS are due by _____ and should be sent to the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation at the above address. Public hearings will be held. Locations and times will be posted on the Department's Website (<http://www.drpt.virginia.gov>), notice will be mailed to interested parties and published in newspapers of general circulation.