



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA
Office of the Governor

Whittington W. Clement
Secretary of Transportation

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

February 2, 2005

Contact: Tamara Neale, VDOT, 804-786-6458
Tamara.Neale@vdot.virginia.gov
Jennifer Pickett, DRPT, 804 786-7432
Jennifer.Pickett@drpt.virginia.gov

**Commonwealth Transportation Board to Consider 25¢ Toll Increase
on Dulles Toll Road to Fund Metrorail in Dulles Corridor**
Tolls would total 50 cents on ramps, 75 cents at toll plaza

Richmond –The Commonwealth Transportation Board will consider a 25-cent toll increase on the Dulles Toll Road at its February 17th meeting in Richmond. Revenues from the proposed increase would be dedicated to help fund Virginia's 25 percent share of the Dulles Corridor Metrorail Project, slated for construction as early as 2006.

The proposed toll increase would be the first since the toll road opened in 1984. It is a major step toward the start of rail service in the Dulles corridor.

"The toll increase is essential to the success of the Dulles Rail project and is consistent with our announcement of August 2003," said Virginia Secretary of Transportation Whittington Clement. "Rail to Dulles will provide capacity equal to four traffic lanes, help increase mobility choices for residents and employees, and ensure the continued vitality of business in the region. Metrorail in the Dulles Corridor is a critical tool for managing congestion growth in an area where jobs are projected to increase by 63 percent and population to increase by 45 percent over the next 20 years."

Tolls would increase from 50 cents to 75 cents at the main toll plaza and from 25 cents to 50 cents at entrance and exit ramps. The 35-cent toll at Sully Road would increase to 50 cents.

Over the past eight years, details about the project, including tolls, have been communicated to the public in more than 250 meetings. The scope and cost of the project were significantly scaled back in 2003 by phasing the overall project. The Final Environmental Impact Statement conducted as part of the Dulles Corridor Metrorail Project planning process recommended a toll increase as part of the funding strategy. Over the past several months, specific toll options were analyzed by the Virginia Department of Transportation and the analysis supports a 25-cent toll increase to fund the state's share of Phase 1 (near East Falls Church station to Wiehle Avenue) and a portion of Phase 2 (Wiehle Avenue to Loudoun County).

The public can get more information on the proposed toll increase and provide e-mail comments at www.virginiadot.org. In addition, the Commonwealth Transportation Board will receive comments during their workshop on February 16th and during their meeting on February 17th. For more information on the Dulles Corridor Metrorail Project, visit www.dullesmetro.com.

-more-

Additional Information on the Dulles Corridor Metrorail Project:

The long-awaited Dulles Corridor Metrorail Project will provide seamless rail access to the region's major activity centers in Maryland, the District of Columbia and Virginia including, among others, FedEx Field, the National Zoo, the U.S. Capitol, Tysons Corner and Washington Dulles International Airport.

Phase 1 will extend out of the Orange line for 11 miles from near East Falls Church station through Tysons Corner to Wiehle Avenue in Reston, and is estimated to cost \$1.5 billion. Phase 2 will further extend the line for 12 more miles from Wiehle Avenue through Dulles International Airport to Route 772 in Loudoun County, and is estimated to cost \$2 billion. The total estimated project cost is \$3.5 billion.

Preliminary Engineering for Phase 1 of the Dulles Corridor Metrorail Project is under way and expected to be completed by the end of 2005, where more detailed schedule and cost information will be available. Additional engineering for Phase 2 is scheduled for completion in spring 2006. Subject to funding and federal approvals, construction could begin as early as 2006, with estimated completion of Phase 1 in 2011 and Phase 2 in 2015.

Funding for the project is projected to be 50 percent federal, 25 percent state and 25 percent local. The Commonwealth's share would be funded by the toll increase and funds allocated through the Virginia Transportation Act of 2000. This increase would complete Virginia's share of Phase 1 and fund a portion of Phase 2.

The project will advance as a partnership led by the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DRPT), Federal Transit Administration, Federal Aviation Administration, Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority, Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority, Fairfax County, Town of Herndon, Loudoun County, Virginia Department of Transportation, and Dulles Transit Partners, LLC.

The Environmental Impact Statement mentioned above is available online at www.dullesmetro.com. For additional information about the Dulles Corridor Metrorail Project, visit www.dullesmetro.com.

Additional Information on the Dulles Toll Road:

The Dulles Toll Road carries more than 200,000 vehicles a day. In fiscal year 2004, toll revenues generated \$41 million of which \$12.2 million went to bond payments, \$15 million to operating expenses and \$750,000 to maintenance reserves. Up to 85 percent of the remaining \$11.1 million was allocated to transit improvements and 15 percent was allocated to the Dulles Toll Road Improvement Fund.

An improvement project to ease the weave-merge problem that exists between the main toll plaza and I-495 is being explored.

The public can get more information on the proposed toll increase and provide comments at www.virginiadot.org.

###