



**COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA**  
**HOUSE OF DELEGATES**  
**RICHMOND**

**APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE**  
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VINCENT F. CALLAHAN, JR., CHAIRMAN

**The Honorable Vincent F. Callahan, Jr.**  
**Comments to the Committee**  
**September 26, 2006**

It has been approximately 12 weeks since we completed our work on the 2006-08 biennial budget. The break-through in the budget stalemate came after the Governor and Senate agreed to remove tax increases in the budget. The agreement was part of a larger agreement to take up transportation at a later date.

Over the course of the summer, a comprehensive review was undertaken on a number of issues that impact the Commonwealth's ability to deliver transportation. We have learned, perhaps affirming what we already knew, that there is a disconnect between land use decisions and road projects.

Unlike public education, where there is a coordinated partnership between the state and localities that is well defined, in transportation there is no coordinated policy that directly links land use decisions with the necessary transportation infrastructure.

Building on our work from the 2006 Session, the various House initiatives again represent an overall framework that looks outside the box and approaches transportation differently.

The proposals that we will take up today promote new and meaningful opportunities to forge partnerships with both the private sector and our local governments.

By using a combination of existing resources and financial tools available to us, we can jump-start important transportation projects and maximum the use of available federal resources.

The investment package before this committee today does not take away any funding from the other transportation districts, nor does this plan take anything away from core services. In fact, we're actually going to be increasing our already sizeable investment in public education by providing nearly \$46 million to provide a 3 percent second year teacher pay raise, which was not specifically provided for in the current budget.

Cynics among us --- and I suspect there are some around Capitol Square --- may be tempted to say that today's actions are just the same old thing. However, unlike those that have chosen to define our "transportation" challenge solely in terms of raising taxes, the House's comprehensive plan includes: VDOT reforms, land use changes, as well as the necessary funding to make measurable improvements in Virginia's transportation infrastructure. Overall, this package will provide \$2.4 billion in new funding over the next 6 years. This is double the amount that this Committee and the entire House of Delegates overwhelmingly approved during the regular 2006 Session

Recently, I read where former VDOT Commissioner Phil Shucet observed that:

*More money isn't the only thing that Virginia's transportation system needs. Lawmakers need to re-think the way they prioritize the spending of transportation dollars, and VDOT needs to get more creative about making operational efficiencies to the transportation system. Instead of fighting to a standstill over taxes, why not find common ground on other reforms that need to be made.*

Our actions in addressing transportation should be measured not solely on the dollars we invest, but on the results we achieve for our commuters. It's not just the amount we spend, but how effectively government spends it.

The infusion we are recommending will support highway, transit, rail and other modal projects. And because those dollars are coupled with important reforms, Virginians can trust that their tax dollars will produce real results.