



News Release

Media Contact:
Georjeane Blumling, Ph.D.
Vice President Public Affairs
757-233-3825
Gblum@tidewater.aaa.com

VIRGINIA STATE SENATE GIVES THE NOD TO LANDMARK TRANSPORTATION FUNDING

Lawmakers on the BRINK of Solving Virginia's 25 year-old Funding Crisis

VIRGINIA BEACH, VA (Thursday, February 14, 2013) – The negotiations will begin in earnest now that [HB 2313](#) (Howell, et. Al.) has passed the Virginia state Senate's chamber intact. It is a signal moment in recent legislative history, says AAA Tidewater, which is urging lawmakers to seize the opportunity to pass the strongest transportation funding legislative package in more than a quarter century.

Now, conferees from both chambers of the [Virginia General Assembly](#) will try to hammer out a landmark and far-reaching transportation funding bill that relies on existing funding mechanisms while incorporating new revenue streams. In addition to the current gas tax, the plan incorporates a tax on gas at the wholesale level among many other strong funding measures. Supporters, after years of frustration, are excited by yesterday's action. It is estimated, if fully enacted, the bill would generate approximately [\\$1 billion](#) per year in new statewide revenue by 2018, an appropriately substantial funding package.

After decades of failed attempts by lawmakers to adequately fund our bridges, roads, and transportation system, AAA urges conferees to seize this opportunity to work in unison to craft a plan, while in conference, that remains substantive and sustainable. "The latest version of the commonwealth's transportation funding plan provides an appropriate level of revenue, is sustainable, includes proper contingency planning, addresses regional needs and is designed to produce strong transportation funding well into the future," said Georjeane Blumling, Vice President of Public Affairs for AAA Tidewater. "Passage of such a plan would be a breakthrough moment in Richmond and for roads, bridges and tunnels across the Commonwealth."

The current bill, originally crafted by the McDonnell Administration, now amended by the Senate, retains many of the components from the original bill as well as new ones that AAA feels are crucial to a successful final resolution. "AAA favors some continued reliance on the gas tax, a true user's fee, as one component of any well-designed funding strategy," continued Blumling. AAA supports the continuation of a dedicated stream of revenue "from transportation and for transportation" which the gas tax represents. Abandoning the gas tax could easily lead to an erosion of the current separation of money for transportation which is now maintained in Virginia's Transportation Trust Fund.

This appears to be the year when lawmakers in both chambers and from both political parties are truly dedicated to making the [solution](#) part of their legacy when the legislative session ends on February 23, 2013 or when this year's session adjourns. "AAA applauds Governor McDonnell, Speaker Howell and all lawmakers who have worked feverishly towards compromise and with bi-partisanship. We urge them to continue to do so as the issue is considered in conference," said Blumling.

-MORE-

“Lawmakers are on the cusp of finally solving Virginia’s transportation funding problem, thus succeeding in doing what has eluded their predecessors for most of a quarter century,” the AAA spokesperson noted. A strong final plan would also save Virginia’s nearly bankrupt transportation system which is critical for the future prosperity of the Commonwealth.

“It would be tragic for not only Virginia motorists’ and the quality of life of Virginia residents, but also for the economic welfare of the Commonwealth to get this close to a solution, only to have the plan watered-down in conference,” Blumling added. If passed, the initial provisions of the plan would go into effect as early as July 1, 2013.

As part of North America’s largest motoring and leisure travel organization, AAA Tidewater Virginia provides its more than 325,000 members with travel, insurance, financial and automotive-related services. Since its founding AAA Tidewater Virginia has been a leader and advocate for the safety and security of all travelers. For more information, visit AAA.com and follow us on Twitter at [Twitter.com/AAATWnews](https://twitter.com/AAATWnews).

AAA news releases, high resolution images, broadcast-quality video, fact sheets and podcasts are available on the AAA NewsRoom at AAA.com/news.

Stay connected with AAA on the web via:

[Twitter.com/AAAnews](https://twitter.com/AAAnews)

[Twitter.com/AAA_Safety](https://twitter.com/AAA_Safety)

[Twitter.com/AAAauto](https://twitter.com/AAAauto)

[YouTube.com/AAA](https://www.youtube.com/AAA)

[MySpace.com/AAAeveryday](https://myspace.com/AAAeveryday)

[Facebook.com/AAAFanPage](https://facebook.com/AAAFanPage)

###