

To the Honorable:

Jim Webb, United States Senator, Virginia
Mark Warner, United States Senator, Virginia
Bob Goodlatte, Member of Congress, VA-6

Rick Boucher, Member of Congress, VA-9
Frank Wolf, Member of Congress, VA-10
Tom Perriello, Member of Congress, VA-5

A RESOLUTION

Petitioning Virginia's Federal representatives to sponsor legislation to fund a comprehensive study of the proposed "Steel Interstate" rail system pilot project between Knoxville, TN, and Harrisburg, PA, as a part of a National Steel Interstate System that would bring fast rail freight and passenger service to the nation

WHEREAS, Congress is considering investments in transportation, public health, renewable energy, energy efficiency, fuel conservation, greenhouse gas abatement, and public infrastructure as fiscal stimulus, and a National Steel Interstate rail system will promote all these goals, and

WHEREAS, Steel Interstate rail service would reduce Interstate truck traffic and dependence on imported oil, while enhancing safety, national security, and economic competitiveness, and

WHEREAS, a Steel Interstate System offers the nation greater transportation productivity at lower cost compared to equivalent interstate highway expansion, and

WHEREAS, today, no passenger rail service, diminishing airline service, and limited intercity public bus service exists within the I-81 corridor and surrounding region but Steel Interstate service allows for harmonious fast passenger and freight operation, and

WHEREAS, Steel Interstate technology offers positive advantages for communities, the Commonwealth, other Interstate 81 states, and the United States relating to cost, safety, economic growth, tourism development, and varied freight and passenger service options, and

WHEREAS, when electrified, the Steel Interstate System offers the U.S. opportunity to employ domestic, renewable energy sources and efficiency to drive transportation, and

WHEREAS, forty-nine Virginia and four Tennessee governing bodies have previously voted support for improved rail service over massive widening of I-81;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that we, the Town Council of the Town of Damascus, VA, urgently petition our congressional delegation to work in concert with other I-81 Corridor representatives to sponsor and secure funding for a comprehensive study for the pilot segment (between Knoxville and Harrisburg) of a National Steel Interstate System.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Damascus Town Council asserts that the following should be included in the comprehensive study: 1) user surveys to identify attractive and cost-effective services to divert the most truckloads to rail and of potential passengers in this corridor, based on 79 MPH track speeds; 2) engineering and design to determine required infrastructure improvements, options, costs, and speed improvement potential; 3) determination of appropriate environmental permitting; 4) exploration of financing, repayment, ownership and partnership scenarios; and 5) review of appropriate state/federal/private or other cooperative agreements.

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Damascus Town Council strongly urges the Norfolk-Southern Corporation, as owner of the current rail right-of-way and provider of rail service in the I-81 corridor, to support and participate in the undertaking of the comprehensive study.

Signed this 1st day of June, 2009.

Seal affixed.

Carl + Jane Meyer, Chairman/Chairwoman/Mayor