

## **2018 Virginia General Assembly Session ...Almost Done**

The 60-day regular session of the 2018 Virginia General Assembly adjourned on Saturday, March 10 as scheduled but without a biennial budget due to disagreement between the House and Senate over expansion of Medicaid. Governor Northam set a special budget session for April 11.

VTA is happy to report that two significant transit bills passed this session [HB 1539](#) was the final conference vehicle for agreement on Metro and other transit measures. The bill allocates \$154 million for Metro funding as was needed but the revenue only comes from existing sources of funding. We now await Governor Northam's action on the bill to see if any changes will be made on revenue sources.

The bill is sent to the Governor for approval, where the Governor may 1) sign the bill into law; 2) amend the bill and return it to the General Assembly for approval; 3) veto the bill and return it to the General Assembly, where on April 18<sup>th</sup> the House of Delegates and the Senate may override the veto by a two-thirds vote of both houses; or, 4) take no action and the bill becomes law without the Governor's signature.

There are other aspects of the bill that call for a transit prioritization process and strategic planning statewide. The Transit Service Delivery Advisory Committee (TSDAC) has already reconvened to begin review and recommendations on establishment of the criteria to comply with the legislative directives.

In other action, after several years of trying to get a gas tax floor in place in Northern Virginia and Hampton Roads, it finally was approved in [SB 896](#). The floor will generate an additional \$45.2M for NVTC including \$18.2M for Metro and \$8.6 for VRE. It will also generate \$21.9 for Hampton Roads. While that cannot be used directly for transit there, it can be applied to other transportation projects that can benefit transit such as BRT lanes.

While funding for statewide transit capital remains unaddressed, we know that the budget conferees are aware of our needs and have indicated a willingness to take a hard look next year. Secretary of Transportation Shannon Valentine is very committed and will be a leader on statewide funding going forward. Our job as transit professionals is to do all we can to make our most compelling case possible. We, along with our partner advocates like MetroNow, made much progress this session in raising the awareness of the importance of transit to our economy, access to jobs, and community vitality. Now we need to keep telling the story all across Virginia. Persistence will win - again!

Stay tuned for the next budget chapter...