



**–The Era of CHEAP OIL Is Over... And It’s Affecting Everyone’s Bottom Line–**

- **The General Assembly can offer cost effective alternatives to Virginians by funding more public transportation, ridesharing and vanpooling.**
- **The following excerpt tells the story... motorists are looking for alternatives to driving.**

**Drivers facing high gas prices**

Potomac News

By [AILEEN STRENG](#)

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As gas prices continue to rise - reaching a record high in Virginia of \$3.15 per gallon on Sunday - Prince William area drivers are taking notice and making changes to lessen the hit to their wallets.

"I'm not moving around as much as I use to," said Edward Baffoe-Bonnie of Woodbridge. "If it's not important enough for me to drive somewhere, I won't do it. I want to save money wherever possible."

The Georgetown University student also is no longer driving into Washington, D.C., for classes. He is taking the Metro.

And he's not alone in choosing public transportation. Other drivers who stopped to fill up their cars at the Wawa gas station on Opitz Boulevard on Monday also said they may use their cars to run errands but when it comes to getting to work, they let someone else drive.

When gas prices started to rise, Sherry Grayson of Fredericksburg started taking the Virginia Railway Express to her job in Crystal City. She works for the federal government, which offers its employees a subsidy for using public transportation.

"I'd rather have my car. I miss it, but I'm saving between \$220 and \$300 a month," Grayson said.

Others, such as Jason Reynolds of Fredericksburg who drives a roundtrip of 70 miles a day to work, don't have a choice. "I have to pay it because I have to drive to work," he said...

- **Giving more Virginians a good transit choice can save a family to over \$6,000 a year!**
- **Expanding and Upgrading the Public Transportation Network is key to changing individual travel choices.**
- **Other major benefits:**
  - Eases road congestion
  - Reduces pollution
  - Reduces CO<sub>2</sub> (greenhouse gas) emissions. **1 gallon of gas = 20 lbs of CO<sub>2</sub>!**
    - In Virginia, 43% of CO<sub>2</sub> emitted from fossil fuel combustion was from transportation (over 54 metric tons in 2004). Emissions rose 31% from 1990 – 2004.
  - Allows a growing elderly/disabled population to travel safely and live independently, helping to control the growth in State Medicaid costs.

## –RECOMMENDATIONS–

The Virginia Transit Association urges the General Assembly to **TAKE 3 ACTIONS** this spring to **adequately fund transportation—roads AND transit.**

Funding transportation is primarily a state responsibility. The General Assembly should identify additional stable, reliable and permanent revenue sources. **Transit funding must be a significant part of any final plan:**

**1. Maintain the gains of HB 3202 for statewide transit and rail funding.**

- ✓ A portion of the state recordation taxes are dedicated to transit operating dollars. This funding allows transit to maintain service despite dramatic fuel increases. (A portion of state recordation taxes are also dedicated to highway maintenance.)
- ✓ 20% of the \$3 billion bond package is dedicated to transit capital; 4.3% to rail.

**2. Provide comparable replacement funding for regional authorities authorized in HB 3202.**

- ✓ **NVTA revenue is critical for essential transit projects and would provide ongoing funds for VRE and WMATA.** Without regional revenues, many of these capital projects will be deferred and others will swamp the existing state transit capital program. This would negatively impact every other public transportation system in the Commonwealth through a further reduction in the state capital matching ratio.
- ✓ **Consideration should be given to the following:**
  - Allow other regions to easily form Transportation Regional Authorities and raise revenue in a constitutionally acceptable manner.
  - Encourage all Regional Authorities to include transit in their allocations.
  - Allow regional authorities to expand, to reflect regional commuting patterns, so those who benefit also pay.

**3. Ensure that any new statewide transportation revenue proposals dedicate at least 20% for public transportation operating and capital,** maintaining the multimodal approach embodied in HB 3202.

✓ **OPTIONS:**

- If new revenues are directed to the Transportation Trust Fund (TTF), by statute, maintenance receives the first draw on highway revenues, and transit would also receive a share.
- If new revenues are directed to the Highway Maintenance & Operating Funds (HMOF), 20% should be dedicated to public transportation (this would not be a new precedent, as prior to 1999, transit was part of the HMOF).

### Energy Outlook

Some oil executives are sounding the alarm bell. At a recent energy conference, John Hess, the chief executive of Hess Corp., the international oil company, warned that an oil crisis was looming if the world did not deal with runaway demand and strained supplies. The chief executive of Royal Dutch Shell, Jeroen van der Veer, said recently, with some understatement, that, "the energy outlook does not look rosy." *Source: International Herald Tribune*