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1 **HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 26**

2 Offered January 14, 2026

3 Prefiled January 12, 2026

4 *Requesting the Department of Rail and Public Transportation, in collaboration with Hampton Roads Transit*
5 *and the City of Virginia Beach, to study the feasibility of extending light rail operations to the Virginia*
6 *Beach Oceanfront. Report.*

7 Patron—Askew

8 Committee Referral Pending

9 WHEREAS, The Tide is the Commonwealth's only light rail, which runs approximately 7.3 miles and
10 connects Eastern Virginia Medical School, located to the west of downtown Norfolk, to Newtown Road and
11 additionally connects to routes serviced by Hampton Roads Transit bus services, providing for accessible and
12 easy public transport; and13 WHEREAS, light rails benefit regions by presenting viable transportation alternatives to driving through
14 heavily congested areas, offer quick transport to key destinations, and provide predictable arrival schedules to
15 residents, visitors, students, and employees; and16 WHEREAS, metropolitan areas that have invested in light rails have experienced significant economic
17 growth and development and attracted additional businesses to their region; and18 WHEREAS, an extension of the light rail in Hampton Roads to the Virginia Beach Oceanfront would not
19 only assist in reducing traffic congestion and offer a space-efficient alternative to increased roadway
20 expansion, but would benefit tourism initiatives by providing quick access to the Virginia Beach Oceanfront
21 from other locations in Hampton Roads, provide residents with mobility issues or residents without access to
22 a vehicle an alternative method of travel, and enable easier access to employment, health care, and
23 entertainment in the City of Virginia Beach; now, therefore, be it24 RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the Department of Rail and Public
25 Transportation, in collaboration with Hampton Roads Transit and the City of Virginia Beach, be requested to
26 study the feasibility of extending light rail operations to the Virginia Beach Oceanfront. Such study shall
27 include an evaluation of potential funding options for construction and future maintenance of the light rail.28 In conducting its study, the Department of Rail and Public Transportation (the Department), in
29 collaboration with Hampton Roads Transit and the City of Virginia Beach, shall (i) assess potential
30 alignments of the light rail, taking into consideration right-of-way impacts, energy needs, and other already
31 established transportation infrastructure; (ii) evaluate (a) engineering needs such as the installation of
32 complex utilities, including drainage systems and power conduits, and track system components; (b)
33 environmental impacts; and (c) community impacts such as additional noise from light rail service and
34 ridership, future population density impacts if the presence of additional public transport incentivizes
35 development of multi-family residential properties surrounding the location of the light rail, and impact to
36 property values of current residences; (iii) analyze funding needs to support construction, operational, and
37 maintenance costs, offer recommendations for funding sources, and analyze potential revenue impacts on the
38 locality; (iv) provide ridership forecasts based on potential alignments proposed for a light rail extension,
39 factoring in the location of possible boarding stations and both resident and visitor population density for
40 proposed boarding stations; and (v) provide recommendations for establishing a fair and transparent public
41 engagement process.

42 All agencies of the Commonwealth shall provide assistance to the Department upon request.

43 The Department shall complete its meetings for the first year by November 30, 2026, and for the second
44 year by November 30, 2027, and the Department shall submit to the Governor and the General Assembly an
45 executive summary and report of its findings and recommendations for publication as a House or Senate
46 document for each year. The executive summaries and reports shall be submitted as provided in the
47 procedures of the Division of Legislative Automated Systems for the processing of legislative documents and
48 reports no later than the first day of the next Regular Session of the General Assembly and shall be posted on
49 the General Assembly's website.

INTRODUCED

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