

The federal government is seeking your public comments on the Tier II Draft Environmental Impact Study (DEIS) for the Richmond to Raleigh segment of the Southeast High Speed Rail corridor.

These written public comments may be submitted by email or regular mail. These comments must be sent by August 30.

See below for:

I. Why do you care?

II. How do I submit my public comments?

III. A sample list of public comments (pick/choose yours)

I. Why do you care?

1. Because the future high speed rail line from Norfolk to Petersburg will directly connect to this Richmond to Raleigh segment of the Southeast Corridor, but this connection is not mentioned in the DEIS document. The final EIS document should (must) address this important future connection of two significant rail lines and the many environmental and other impacts, mostly positive, that this connection from Norfolk will have on the Southeast Rail Corridor.
2. Because the impacts and needs of passengers travelling to and from Norfolk are not sufficiently addressed, if at all, in the DEIS document, and the high levels of ridership and other merits that Hampton Roads will bring to the Southeast Corridor are not discussed.
3. Because the earlier Tier I process included 18 public hearings, but none of those hearings were conducted in Hampton Roads, and because the current Tier II process recently completed another eight public hearings but, again, none of these hearings was conducted in Hampton Roads. We were left out, so now we have no choice but to submit written public comments.
4. Because the rail line to Hampton Roads was designated in 1995 to be an integral part of the Southeast High Speed Rail Corridor. Unfortunately, our region has been late, but is now starting to get engaged in the development process. Your public comments now will be an important piece of this new regional process.
5. Because, at the end of the day, this Richmond to Raleigh segment of the Southeast High Speed Rail system will dramatically affect three of the nation's truly important metropolitan areas, namely Greater Raleigh, Hampton Roads and the Richmond Regional Area.
 - In multiple ways, Hampton Roads is the largest and most nationally significant of these three metropolitan areas.
 - It is in the nation's best interests as well as the state and Southeast Corridor's best interests to comprehensively acknowledge and discuss Hampton Roads in this draft DEIS document, rather than to omit such considerations.

II. How do I submit my written public comments? This is easy:

By email to:

Christine Fix, christine.fix@drpt.virginia.gov and to
Marc Hamel, mhamel@ncdot.gov

By regular mail:

SEHSR Comments
c/o Marc Hamel, Rail Project Engineer, NCDOT Rail Division
1553 Mail Service Center
Raleigh, NC 27699-1553 and to

SEHSR Comments
c/o Christine Fix, Rail Planning Coordinator, VDRPT
600 East Main Street, Suite 2102
Richmond, VA 23219

Suggestions:

1. Use business, organizational or personal letterhead for your comments.
2. If using email, send your letter with your comments as an attachment.
3. Send your letter, individually, to both North Carolina and Virginia.
4. In your comments, address some of the 'Why do you care?' issues above.
5. Add your own personal reasons of why rail is important to you.
6. The DEIS document is at http://www.sehsr.org/deis/sehsr_deis_download_files.html or you can navigate to this from the main sehsr.org website.
7. Positive letters, letters with constructive recommendations are what the system needs. Opening or closing remarks should offer thanks and should recognize the hard work they invest every day on this major, long term project.

III. A sample list of public comments (pick and choose those that are especially important to you and compose your own comment or recommendation)

1. In the DEIS, recommend addressing the high speed rail line to and from Norfolk which is an integral part of the SE Corridor and which will connect to the system in Petersburg. (Initial plans were to do this in the DEIS, but it was not done).
2. In the DEIS, recommend describing (rather than omitting) the operational impacts associated with the high speed rail line to and from Norfolk that will connect to the system in Petersburg.
3. In the DEIS, recommend describing the design, reasoning and issues associated with the actual rail connection in Petersburg (a Norfolk Southern and CSX connection).
4. In the DEIS, recommend describing the positive ridership (patronage) impacts on the SEHSR line in Petersburg associated with the future connection of Hampton

Roads with its 1.7 million citizens and its unique array of commercial and federal agency interests that need to be recognized.

5. Recommend describing the wide range of national benefits that stem from including the Norfolk rail line's connection to the SEHSR corridor.
6. Recommend describing (rather than omitting) the value this segment of the SEHSR corridor will provide to major and nearby metropolitan areas in both North Carolina and Virginia. (Namely, Hampton Roads and North East North Carolina)
7. Recommend addressing train station plans in Petersburg caused by connecting the High Speed Rail line from Norfolk. (Address access, station/platform capacity, parking, etc.)
8. Recommend describing in the DEIS the possibility that future train sets may be required to provide through service (one-seat travel) for passengers travelling between (a) Hampton Roads and the Piedmont region of North Carolina and (b) also between Hampton Roads and Central Virginia. (In the long run, we prefer not to have to change trains to go north or south)
9. Recommend stating that the design described for the Petersburg to Raleigh section should also be the same design standard established for the Petersburg to Norfolk section of the SE Corridor.
10. Recommend scheduling activities that will generate public participation from agencies, citizens and transportation planners in Hampton Roads and Northeast North Carolina in order for our citizens to catch up in this planning process. (The Hampton Roads region has never been adequately included in the process so far; the same for NE North Carolina)
11. Recommend adding References in the DEIS to studies that have been completed for the high speed rail Extension line to and from Norfolk. (This rail line is an integral part of the SE Corridor system, a point to acknowledge not overlook)

Overall

- 1.) The HSR line to and from Norfolk **IS an integral part** of the SE Corridor.
- 2.) **The HSR line from Norfolk will add** prestige, merit and cost benefit to the SE Corridor.
- 3.) Hampton Roads **has not been included** in the planning process for several years.
- 4.) Documentation **does not adequately support the needs** of the HR metro area.

At the end of the day, the Richmond to Raleigh segment of the SE High Speed Rail system described in the DEIS **will dramatically affect three of the nation's truly important metropolitan areas**, namely Greater Raleigh, Hampton Roads and the Richmond Regional Area. You cannot leave Hampton Roads out of the planning process.

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