

SENATE OF VIRGINIA



LYNWOOD W. LEWIS, JR.
6TH SENATORIAL DISTRICT
ALL OF ACCOMACK, NORTHAMPTON, AND
MATHEWS COUNTIES; AND PART OF
THE CITIES OF NORFOLK AND VIRGINIA BEACH
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AGRICULTURE, CONSERVATION AND
NATURAL RESOURCES
EDUCATION AND HEALTH
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May 24, 2022

The Honorable Pete Buttigieg
Secretary, U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, S.E.
Washington, D.C. 20590

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

I am writing to express my strong support for Hampton Roads Transit's (HRT) combined application for the Federal Transit Administration's Low or No Emission Grant Program and Grants for Buses and Bus Facilities Competitive Program application for the construction of the new, state-of-the-art, Southside Bus Operating Division Facility. This grant will support a critical component of HRT's expanding service and will meet both HRT's and USDOT's goals of moving towards a green-energy future. The new Southside Bus Operating Division Facility will replace aging, inefficient infrastructure, reduce operating costs, and provide opportunities for good paying jobs in the region. The new facility will be built to support up to 100 battery electric buses and will have the ability to use renewable energy sources such as electricity generated from the Coastal Virginia Offshore Wind Project offshore wind farms and on-site solar panels.

HRT is vital to the economy of Hampton Roads. They provide transit service to six of Virginia's ten most populous cities. In addition to 72 bus routes, the agency provides ferry, paratransit, seasonal trolleys, and transportation demand management services. HRT is also home to Virginia's only light rail system. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, HRT carried nearly 1,000,000 trips per month across the region on all of its services. The new Southside Bus Operating Division Facility supported by these grants will enable the agency to continue to meet its goal of connecting Hampton Roads with transportation solutions that are reliable, safe, efficient, and sustainable.

Having represented the Hampton Roads region for nearly two decades, I have been deeply involved on progress as it pertains to two of the most pressing issues in our area: public transportation/transit and flooding as it relates to climate change and sea level rise. The new plans heralded by the Hampton Roads Transit are innovative and necessary in addressing critical infrastructure needs for communities that are both reliant on public transit and disproportionately affected by sea level rise, flooding and climate change. I am certain HRT will be a good steward of this funding and that the returns on the investment will be reverberate throughout the region.

Thank you for your consideration of the Hampton Roads Transit grant applications.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Lynwood W. Lewis, Jr.".

Lynwood W. Lewis, Jr.
Senator, Sixth District of Virginia