



May 26, 2022

The Honorable Nuria Fernandez, Administrator  
Federal Transit Administration  
1200 New Jersey Ave., SE  
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Administrator Fernandez:

Sierra Club Virginia Chapter strongly supports 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.

Sierra Club advocates for clean, equitable, accessible transit for all, reduction of vehicle miles traveled, and reduction of greenhouse gas emissions. This critical project will help electrify the HRT bus fleet and bus facilities which will improve air quality and combat climate change, benefiting the region's communities, residents, and stakeholders, especially those most vulnerable to tailpipe pollution. Thank you for your consideration of HRT's grant application.

Sincerely,

*Steve Banashek*

Steve Banashek  
Electric Vehicle Chair  
Sierra Club Virginia Chapter