

# SUPPORT [HJ 542](#)

Topic: Equity in Public Transportation and Modernization Study

Bill Patron: Del. McQuinn

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## Reasons to support HJ 542:

1. Since 1980 in Virginia, the transportation sector has produced more carbon pollution than the electric power sector. In 2017, the electric power sector accounted for around 29% and the transportation sector accounted for about 48% of carbon emissions. Exacerbating the problem, vehicle miles traveled have increased over the past few years.
2. Pollution, such as particulate matter from tires, breaks and tailpipes, is released into communities from vehicles. Unfortunately, most of this pollution ends up disproportionately impacting communities of color. This drives disproportionate negative public health consequences such as increased asthma rates, some of which has been linked to children living near high traffic areas.
3. Inequitable transportation planning profoundly shapes the quality of life, health, economic and social opportunities for low-income communities and communities of color. There are not enough clean, affordable, accessible, and reliable transportation options available.
4. Right now transit systems across Virginia lack the necessary infrastructure to boost ridership, reduce traffic, and lower air pollution across the Commonwealth.

## Overview:

This bill will allow the Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DRPT) to conduct a transit modernization needs study and improve transit funding and services for current riders as well as for the future. The bill will study health, equity and environmental quality, prioritize investments in low-income neighborhoods and communities of color, and focus on improving accessibility, including affordability. This means not just getting more electric vehicles on the road, but transforming our transportation systems to address decades of inequitable, unhealthy, and unsustainable planning moving towards transportation justice.

The legislature has the power to determine transportation state funding priorities and projects. We can re-invest and rebuild a transportation system that is safe, clean, widely accessible and increases economic and social mobility for riders, especially in communities of color and low-income communities.



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This position was taken by Virginia Conservation Network (VCN)'s Legislative Committee and Board of Directors and is supported by Virginia's conservation community. For a complete list of VCN positions, visit [www.vcnva.org/bill-tracker](http://www.vcnva.org/bill-tracker). VCN is committed to building a powerful, diverse, and highly-coordinated conservation movement focused on protecting our Commonwealth's natural resources today and for tomorrow.