



To the Honorable Operations Board Members and Commissioners  
The Virginia Railway Express  
The Northern Virginia Transportation Commission  
The Potomac and Rappahannock Transportation Commission

In connection with our audit of the financial statements of the Virginia Railway Express (VRE) for the year ended June 30, 2017, we are noting new Governmental Accounting Standard Board (GASB) pronouncements we think should be communicated to VRE.

#### ***New GASB Pronouncements***

At June 30, 2017, the Governmental Accounting Standards Board (GASB) had issued several statements not yet implemented by VRE. The statements which might impact VRE are as follows:

#### ***GASB Statement No. 75, Accounting and Financial Reporting for Postemployment Benefits Other Than Pensions***

The objective of this Statement is to improve accounting and financial reporting by state and local governments for postemployment benefits other than pensions (other postemployment benefits or OPEB). This Statement replaces the requirements of Statement No. 45, *Accounting and Financial Reporting by Employers for Postemployment Benefits Other Than Pensions*, as amended, and Statement No. 57, *OPEB Measurements by Agent Employers and Agent Multiple-Employer Plans*, for OPEB. Statement No. 74, *Financial Reporting for Postemployment Benefit Plans Other Than Pension Plans*, establishes new accounting and financial reporting requirements for OPEB plans.

The scope of this Statement includes OPEB plans – defined benefit and defined contribution – administered through trusts that meet the following criteria:

- Contributions from employers and nonemployer contributing entities to the OPEB plan and earnings on those contributions are irrevocable.
- OPEB plan assets are dedicated to providing OPEB to plan members in accordance with the benefit terms.
- OPEB plan assets are legally protected from the creditors of employers, nonemployer contributing entities, and the OPEB plan administrator. If the plan is a defined benefit OPEB plan, plan assets also are legally protected from creditors of the plan members.

This Statement also includes requirements to address financial reporting for assets accumulated for purposes of providing defined benefit OPEB through OPEB plans that are not administered through trusts that meet the specified criteria.

The requirements of Statement No. 75 are effective for financial statements for fiscal years beginning after June 15, 2017.

### **GASB Statement No. 83, *Certain Asset Retirement Obligations***

This Statement addresses accounting and financial reporting for certain asset retirement obligations (ARO). An ARO is a legally enforceable liability associated with the retirement of a tangible capital asset. A government that has legal obligations to perform future asset retirement activities related to its tangible assets should recognize a liability based on the guidance in this Statement.

This Statement will enhance comparability of financial statements among governments by establishing uniform criteria for governments to recognize and measure certain AROs, including obligations that may not have been previously reported. This Statement will also enhance the decision-usefulness of the information provided to financial statement users by requiring disclosures related to those AROs.

The requirements of Statement No. 83 are effective for financial statements for fiscal years beginning after June 15, 2018.

### **GASB Statement No. 85, *Omnibus 2017***

The objective of this Statement is to address practice issues that have been identified during implementation and application of certain GASB Statements. This Statement addresses a variety of topics including issues related to blending component units, goodwill, fair value measurement and application, and postemployment benefits (pensions and OPEB).

The requirements of this Statement will enhance consistency in the application of accounting and financial reporting requirements. Consistent reporting will improve the usefulness of information for users of VRE's financial statements.

The requirements of Statement No. 85 are effective for financial statements for fiscal years beginning after June 15, 2017.

### **GASB Statement No. 86, *Certain Debt Extinguishment Issues***

The primary objective of this Statement is to improve consistency in accounting and financial reporting for in-substance defeasance of debt by providing guidance for transactions in which cash and other monetary assets acquired with only existing resources – resources other than the proceeds of refunding debt – are placed in an irrevocable trust for the sole purpose of extinguishing debt. The Statement also improves accounting and financial reporting for prepaid insurance on debt that is extinguished and notes to financial statements for debt that is defeased in substance.

Statement No. 7, *Advance Refundings Resulting in Defeasance of Debt*, requires that debt be considered defeased in substance when the debtor irrevocably places cash or other monetary assets acquired with refunding debt proceeds in a trust to be used solely for satisfying scheduled payments of both principal and interest of the defeased debt. The trust also is required to meet certain conditions for the transaction to qualify as an in-substance defeasance. This Statement establishes essentially the same requirements for when a government places cash and other monetary assets acquired with only existing resources in an irrevocable trust to extinguish the debt. In financial statements using the economic resources measurement focus, governments should recognize any difference between the reacquisition price and the net carrying amount of the debt defeased in substance using only existing resources as a separately identified gain or loss in the period of defeasance.

Governments that defease debt using only existing resources should provide a general description of the transaction in the notes to financial statements in the period of the defeasance. In all periods following an in-substance defeasance of debt using only existing resources, the amount of that debt that remains outstanding at period-end should be disclosed.

The requirements of Statement No. 86 are effective for financial statements for fiscal years beginning after June 15, 2017.

## **GASB Statement No. 87, *Leases***

The objective of this Statement is to better meet the information needs of financial statement users by improving accounting and financial reporting for leases by governments. This Statement increases the usefulness of governments' financial statements by requiring recognition of certain lease assets and liabilities for leases that previously were classified as operating leases and recognized as inflows of resources or outflows of resources based on the payment provisions of the contract. It establishes a single model for lease accounting based on the foundational principle that leases are financings of the right to use an underlying asset. Under this Statement, a lessee is required to recognize a lease liability and an intangible right-to-use lease asset, and a lessor is required to recognize a lease receivable and a deferred inflow of resources, thereby enhancing the relevance and consistency of information about governments' leasing activities. A lease is defined as a contract that conveys control of the right to use another entity's nonfinancial asset as specified in the contract for a period of time in an exchange or exchange-like transaction. Examples of nonfinancial assets include buildings, land, vehicles, and equipment. Any contract that meets this definition should be accounted for under the leases guidance, unless specifically excluded in this Statement.

The requirements of Statement No. 87 are effective for financial statements for fiscal years beginning after December 15, 2019.

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This report is intended solely for the information and use of management, the Operations Board and others within the organization and is not intended to be and should not be used by anyone other than these specified parties.

If you have any questions concerning any of these items or if we can be of further assistance, please contact us. We thank you for the opportunity to conduct your audit for the year ended June 30, 2017 and express our appreciation to everyone for their cooperation during this engagement.

*PBMares, LLP*

Harrisonburg, Virginia  
October 30, 2017