2022 ANNUAL REPORT

Table of Contents

Chairman's Letter 3

History and Purpose 4

Board Membership and Staff 5-6

Activity Report 7

News Releases.....8

Coalfields Expressway Map (Virginia Section) 19

Coalfields Expressway Interstate Connectivity Map 20

Contact Information 21

Chairman's Letter

January 6, 2023

The Honorable Glenn Youngkin
Governor of Virginia
Patrick Henry Building, 3rd Floor
1111 East Broad Street
Richmond, Virginia 23219

Dear Governor Youngkin,

We are pleased to submit to you and the Virginia General Assembly the 2022 Annual Report of the Virginia Coalfields Expressway Authority (the "Authority"). This report is submitted as both the annual report and the annual executive summary of the Authority required under Virginia Code § 15.2-6015.4(3).

The Virginia Coalfields Expressway Authority was formed by the General Assembly in 2017 to improve the transportation into, from, within, and through Southwest Virginia, assist in regional economic development, and generally enhance highway safety in the affected localities of Southwest Virginia. The Authority has a 12-member board and is staffed by the Virginia Coalfield Economic Development Authority (VCEDA).

The Coalfields Expressway, designated as U.S. Route 121 and a Congressional High Priority Corridor, is a proposed limited-access highway to provide a modern, safe, and efficient transportation artery through the coalfield region of far Southwest Virginia and southern West Virginia. The completion of the Coalfields Expressway would open up new areas for economic development, including new business and industrial sites and improved access to existing business and industrial parks, thereby making the region much more competitive for economic development projects. The Coalfields Expressway also would allow the region's citizens much better access to employment, educational, workforce development, and health care opportunities.

We look forward to continuing to work with the Governor's office and the General Assembly to help advance the completion of the Coalfields Expressway in as expeditious manner as possible for the benefit of the Commonwealth's citizens in Southwest Virginia.

Sincerely,

Jay Rife
Jay Rife
Chairman

History and Purpose

The Virginia Coalfields Expressway Authority (the "Authority") was created by the Virginia General Assembly in 2017. It was established as a body politic and corporate and is a political subdivision of the Commonwealth of Virginia. The Authority has all the powers and duties conferred under Chapter 60.01 of Title 15.2 of the Code of Virginia, as amended.

The Authority's enabling act provides for a 12-member board comprised of non-legislative citizen members and ex officio members. The process of the initial appointments to the Authority's board was completed in September 2020, and the Authority held its first meeting quickly thereafter on October 6, 2020 at the Southern Gap Transportation and Logistics Center at Grundy, Virginia. Jay Rife of Buchanan County was elected the first chairman of the Authority, and Michael Yates of Dickenson County as the first vice-chairman. Jonathan Belcher, the executive director/general counsel of the Virginia Coalfield Economic Development Authority (VCEDA), which provides staff support to the Authority, was designated the executive director of the Authority and also its secretary/treasurer.

The board has met numerous times since that initial meeting on October 6, 2020. At the December 9, 2022 meeting, Jay Rife was re-elected as chairman for 2023 and J. H. Rivers was re-elected as vice-chairman for 2023.

Pursuant to Virginia Code § 15.2-6015.1, the primary purpose of the Authority is to improve the transportation into, from, within, and through Southwest Virginia, assist in regional economic development, and generally enhance highway safety in the affected localities.

The Coalfields Expressway, designated as U.S. Route 121 and a Congressional High Priority Corridor, is a proposed four-lane, limited-access highway to provide a modern, safe, and efficient transportation artery through the coalfields region of far Southwest Virginia and southern West Virginia.

The proposed expressway is designed to provide safe and rapid access to communities along the corridor, with interchanges connecting citizens of Pound, Clintwood, Clinchco, Haysi, Breaks, Grundy, and Slate. The Coalfields Expressway is sometimes referred to by the acronym "CFX."

According to an economic impact analysis of the Coalfields Expressway completed in 2021 by Chmura Economics & Analytics, the cumulative economic impact of the Coalfields Expressway during a 50-year span is estimated to be $12.8 billion in 2021 dollars. The study also noted that direct construction spending on the project can support 26,246 cumulative jobs in its bi-state corridor from 2013 to 2038. The cumulative ripple effect (indirect plus induced) of capital investment can generate $1.8 billion in spending and 13,859 cumulative jobs in the corridor, the study found. The cumulative direct and ripple effect of this construction spending therefore can support a grand total of 40,105 jobs, according to Chmura's report.

Board Membership

Virginia Code § 15.2-6015.2 specifies that the Authority shall have a total membership of 12 members that shall consist of nine non-legislative citizen members and three ex officio members. Non-legislative citizen members shall be appointed as follows: six members to be appointed by the Speaker of the House of Delegates, two of whom shall be residents of Buchanan County, two of whom shall be residents of Dickenson County, and two of whom shall be residents of Wise County, and three members to be appointed by the Senate Committee on Rules, one of whom shall be a resident of Buchanan County, one of whom shall be a resident of Dickenson County, and one of whom shall be a resident of Wise County. The chairmen of the boards of supervisors of Buchanan, Dickenson, and Wise Counties or their designees shall serve ex officio with voting privileges. Non-legislative citizen members of the Authority shall be citizens of the Commonwealth.

Ex officio members of the Authority shall serve terms coincident with their terms of office. Appointments to fill vacancies, other than by expiration of a term, shall be for the unexpired terms. Vacancies shall be filled in the same manner as the original appointments. All members may be reappointed. After the initial staggering of terms, non-legislative citizen members shall be appointed for a term of four years.

The following is a membership list of the Authority's board in 2022:

NAME	JURISDICTION	APPOINTMENT METHOD	TERM OF OFFICE
Jay Rife (Chairman)	Buchanan County	Speaker of the House	Expires 6/30/2024
J. H. Rivers (Vice-Chairman)	Wise County	Senate Committee on Rules	Expires 6/30/2024
Bonnie L. Bates	Wise County	Speaker of the House	Expires 6/30/2024
Philip Cook	Buchanan County	Ex Officio	Coincident with office
James Keen	Buchanan County	Speaker of the House	Expires 6/30/2024
Peggy Kiser	Dickenson County	Ex Officio	Coincident with office
Scott Mullins	Dickenson County	Senate Committee on Rules	Expires 6/30/2024
Melanie Salyer	Wise County	Speaker of the House	Expires 6/30/2024
John Schoolcraft	Wise County	Ex Officio	Coincident with office
Ed Talbott, III	Buchanan County	Senate Committee on Rules	Expires 6/30/2024
Keith Viers	Dickenson County	Speaker of the House	Expired 6/30/2022
Mike Yates	Dickenson County	Speaker of the House	Expired 6/30/2022

CFX Authority Members

Members and officers of the Virginia Coalfields Expressway Authority pose for a photograph at the December 9, 2022 board meeting in Lebanon, Virginia. Pictured, from left (front), are John Schoolcraft; J.H. Rivers, vice chairman; Jay Rife, chairman; and Jonathan Belcher, executive director and secretary/treasurer; and (back) Scott Mullins; Peggy Kiser; Melanie Salyer; James Keen; Keith Viers; and Philip Cook. Not pictured are Bonnie Bates and Ed Talbott, III.

Staff

Jonathan Belcher
Executive Director

Pursuant to Virginia Code § 15.2-6015.5, the Virginia Coalfield Economic Development Authority (VCEDA) provides staff assistance to the Virginia Coalfields Expressway Authority. VCEDA is a regional economic development authority established by the Virginia General Assembly in 1988 to enhance and diversify the economy of the coalfield region of Virginia. Jonathan Belcher, who serves as the Executive Director/General Counsel of VCEDA, was designated as the Executive Director and Secretary/Treasurer of the Virginia Coalfields Expressway Authority. Additional VCEDA staff providing assistance include Jean Jordan, Marketta Horton, Mitzi White, Susan Copeland, Cathy St. Clair, Jim Baldwin, and Charlotte Mullins.

Activity Report 2022

The Virginia General Assembly established the Virginia Coalfields Expressway Authority (the "Authority") in 2017, and the process of appointing the initial board members was completed in September 2020. The Authority, with the assistance of the Virginia Coalfield Economic Development Authority (VCEDA), then quickly held its first meeting on October 6, 2020, and the Authority's board has met numerous times since that date. 2021 marked the first full year of activity for the Authority, after becoming operational in late 2020. 2022 proved to be a productive year for the Authority, despite the fact that the Authority continues to remain unfunded operationally, however.

At the Authority's board meeting on April 18, 2022, the Authority was joined by United States Senator Tim Kaine and representatives of the Appalachian Regional Commission, among others, for a discussion on the Coalfields Expressway. Jonathan Belcher, executive director, informed the board that a congressionally directed spending request of $1.995 million had been obtained in the FY2022 federal budget for pre-engineering work on the sections of the Coalfields Expressway from Grundy, Va. to the West Virginia state line. Mr. Belcher also obtained the board's consent to seek an additional $7 million in congressionally directed spending to add additional lanes to the U.S. 121/U.S. 460 intersection and Hawk's Nest sections of the Coalfields Expressway in Buchanan County to make those sections a four-lane. The invaluable assistance of the region's legislators in these efforts was noted.

On May 11, representatives from the Authority and several coalfield counties attended a public meeting held by the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) in Abingdon which was attended by the Virginia Secretary of Transportation and other transportation officials. The importance of the Coalfields Expressway was emphasized during public comment at this meeting.

The Authority board met again on June 30, 2022. At this meeting, the board was joined by United States Congressman Morgan Griffith who spoke about the efforts to obtain the $1.995 million in the FY2022 federal budget and his support for obtaining additional funding for the Coalfields Expressway. Updates were provided by VDOT on how they would use the $1.995 million and also on the current status of the Coalfields Expressway funding and construction.

The board's final meeting of the year was held on December 9, 2022. At this meeting, Jay Rife was re-elected chairman and J. H. Rivers was re-elected vice-chairman for 2023. Jonathan Belcher, executive director, discussed with the board a request made to Governor Youngkin for $500,000 annually in operational funding for the Authority. Virginia Senator Travis Hackworth joined the board for this meeting and pledged to work with the Governor's office in seeking this funding. Mr. Belcher also updated the board on the status of the $7 million in congressionally directed spending requested in the FY2023 federal budget for paving. Chairman Jay Rife reminded the board concerning the expressway that: "It's going to be a difficult task, but we can't get discouraged. This is a long-term project." On December 29, the $7 million funding was included in the FY2023 federal budget signed by the president, and like the previous $1.995 million, will be managed by VDOT. The Authority's board plans to meet next in Spring 2023.

Sen. Tim Kaine Joins Discussion with Virginia CFX Authority Board About Expressway Future

Virginia Senator Travis Hackworth, left, chats with U.S. Sen. Tim Kaine at the April 18, 2022 meeting of the Virginia Coalfields Expressway Authority Board in Grundy, Va. The future of the expressway project and what $1.995 million in new federal funding appropriated for the project will mean to advance it were among the items discussed at the meeting.

GRUNDY, VA – APRIL 19, 2022 -- The Virginia Coalfields Expressway Authority (CFX) board met Monday afternoon and was joined by U.S. Sen. Tim Kaine to talk about the future of the expressway project and what $1.995 million in new federal funding appropriated for the project will mean to advance it. Also

discussed were ways to continue to move the project forward which saw the authority agree to a motion to seek further congressionally directed spending to pave 2.2 miles of U.S. 121 (CFX) within the Corridor Q project to four lanes. Current paving funds allocated call for paving of just two lanes and a truck climbing lane.

Corridor Q is adjacent to the industrial park at Southern Gap in Buchanan County.

“From an economic development standpoint, it would be very beneficial to have four lanes adjacent to the Southern Gap industrial park,” said Virginia CFX Executive Director Jonathan Belcher. Belcher also serves as executive director/general counsel for the Virginia Coalfield Economic Development Authority (VCEDA) which provides staff support to the CFX Authority.

The Virginia Coalfields Expressway Authority was created by the Virginia General Assembly in 2017 “to improve the transportation into, from, within, and through Southwest Virginia, assist in regional economic development, and generally enhance highway safety in the affected localities.”

The authority has a 12-member board comprised of representatives from the counties of Buchanan, Dickenson and Wise.

In a roundtable discussion with Sen. Kaine at the Southern Gap Transportation and Logistics Center following a brief overview of the project provided by Belcher, and an update on the route construction by Marty Halloway of the Virginia Department of Transportation, the benefits of coal synergies to developing the roadway were emphasized. Also taking part in the discussion were representatives of the Appalachian Regional Commission and Virginia Sen. Travis Hackworth.

VDOT estimates on the completion of Corridor Q are that the segment of the roadway from the Kentucky state line to Route 744 (Southern Gap Road) will be early fall 2023; Route 744 to Route 604 (Poplar Creek), early 2025; and Route 604 (Poplar Creek) to Grundy, late 2027. The last segment in the Corridor Q section will be the location of the second tallest bridge in the state of Virginia. The $1.995 million recently appropriated at the federal level is for pre-engineering of the roadway from Grundy to the West Virginia state line.

James Keen, a member of the authority board, who also serves as chairman of the Breaks Regional Airport Authority and who is a former member of the Virginia Commonwealth Transportation Board, noted that on the Hawk’s Nest section of the project, mining coal while constructing the roadway had saved some $90 million.

“We need to be exploring and encouraging coal companies to identify locations they have interest in because through these synergies we can have great impact,” Keen said.

Kaine suggested that with the abundance of metallurgical coal in the region and the push at the federal level to encourage domestic production of steel, additional synergies might also be found.

CFX Authority Board Chairman Jay Rife noted when he first began to serve on the Buchanan County Industrial Development Authority, where he still serves today, he had seen the availability of land to develop, such as that found at Southern Gap, had increased significantly.

Tom Smith, with the ARC, noted permitting is critical and he suggested "time is of the essence" to "strike when the market is good."

"This is a good time to hit the pedal to metal on this project," Kaine said, adding, "I look forward to working with this board on it."

Kaine said he has followed the progress of the CFX project through the years and he said with additional investments now being made at the federal level in infrastructure, projects like the CFX are advancing.

"This is a necessary project," Kaine said. "It's not easy. It's not cheap, but with the infrastructure bill, the American Rescue Act and return of earmarks to the federal budget, there are resources there."

Kaine said he works in tandem with Sen. Mark Warner and Congressman Morgan Griffith on Virginia projects and he added that Virginia has a monthly luncheon where all Virginia senators and congressmen meet to talk about priorities for the state.

"This is a project we can try to get support for from other members of the (Virginia) delegation," Kaine said. He suggested that with state funds how they are and additional federal monies out there, "this is the right time to push."

The recently allocated $1.995 million for pre-engineering, he said is important because planning is important.

"You've got to plan it right to do it right," he said.

Tom Smith, with the ARC, noted that the influx of federal money into the project will allow for the acceleration of work on the project. He noted big highway projects take decades to finish, but said he was thrilled to see the excitement on the project and the interest in the project from both Virginia and West Virginia.

Hackworth noted that from a logistics standpoint alone, the expressway project is critical to businesses in the region to move goods from one location to another. He urged those present to review a Chmura study on the project which showed the return on investment for the project is significant.

"We need the Coalfields Expressway built," Hackworth said. "We are committed to do what we can with the resources we have to see this project built. It's baby steps. We appreciate the help on the federal side and we'll take all the help we can get."

Belcher noted an important role of the CFX Authority is to keep the momentum on the road project going.

"It's about keeping the enthusiasm and optimism going," Belcher said.

He asked if there was a possibility of U.S. 121, the designated Coalfields Expressway route, could be added to the Appalachian highway system, not just Corridor Q, but the entire length of the proposed project.

Also discussed were workforce needs and getting that piece of the puzzle correct as construction on the expressway project moves forward in the future.

"We realize the clock is ticking in Southwest Virginia," Hackworth said. "It is very critical we act now and the sooner the better."

The CFX Authority Board will meet again in June or July.

About the Virginia Coalfields Expressway Authority: The Virginia Coalfields Expressway Authority was formed by the Virginia General Assembly in 2017 to improve the transportation into, from, within and through Southwest Virginia; to assist in regional economic development; and to generally enhance highway safety in the affected localities of Southwest Virginia. The Coalfields Expressway, designated as U.S. Route 121 and a Congressional High Priority Corridor, is a proposed limited-access highway to provide a modern, safe and efficient transportation artery through the coalfields region of far Southwest Virginia and southern West Virginia. The Virginia Coalfield Economic Development Authority provides staff support to the authority board. www.vceda.us/cfxauthority.

###

Congressman Morgan Griffith Joins Discussion with Virginia CFX Authority Board About Expressway Funding

Ninth District Congressman Morgan Griffith met with members of the Virginia Coalfields Expressway Authority and representatives of the Virginia Department of Transportation on June 30, 2022 in Lebanon. From left are Marty Halloway; Jonathan Belcher; Peggy Kiser; Griffith; Melanie Salyer; James Keen; Laura Beth Hale; Ed Talbott III; David Rauchle; and Philip Cook.

LEBANON, VA -- JUNE 30, 2022 -- Virginia Coalfields Expressway Authority members heard an update on how the Virginia Department of Transportation plans to utilize $1.995 million recently allocated by the federal government for pre-engineering for the expressway project during a meeting of the authority board Thursday in Lebanon.

Board members welcomed Ninth District Congressman Morgan Griffith, who addressed the board about the recent federal funds allocation.

“I am very committed to this project,” Griffith said. “This roadway has a huge benefit in Virginia and will transform the economy, or at least gives us a fighting chance to transform the economy.”

Griffith noted the Coalfields Expressway in Virginia and its connectivity to Kentucky and West Virginia also benefits those states by providing another transportation artery to the south.

“This road will give us bigger and better opportunities to land some major job creators,” Griffith said.

Virginia Coalfields Expressway Authority Executive Director Jonathan Belcher noted that in addition to the federal funds in the current fiscal year federal budget, the expressway authority is working again with federal legislators on a congressionally directed funding request of $7 million for paving of additional lanes at the US 121/460 intersection and Hawk’s Nest sections. That request was submitted for consideration in the upcoming federal budget. Earlier this week, the House Appropriations Transportation Subcommittee released its bill for FY23 and the expressway project was included, but at the level of $3.5 million. Continued negotiations by Virginia federal legislators may see a larger amount allocated.

Griffith noted he will continue to work with Virginia Senators Mark Warner and Tim Kaine to see funding for the project advance.

Belcher provided an update on VDOT’s estimated timeline on the completion of segments of Corridor Q of the overall project. A portion of the CFX overlaps the new US 460 (Corridor Q).

Current VDOT estimates call for the following completion dates:

- Kentucky state line to Route 744 (Southern Gap) – early fall 2023.
- Route 744 to Route 604 (Poplar Creek) – early 2025.
- Route 604 (Poplar Creek) to Grundy – late 2027.

Construction of remaining sections of the CFX in Virginia are currently not funded, which is the major challenge, Belcher noted, adding West Virginia has plans to complete its sections of the expressway in that state within 10 years.

“Momentum for the CFX continues to build and is headed in the right direction,” Belcher said, adding, “the CFX is the only solution to the economic plight of many areas of the coalfields.”

VDOT District Engineer of Mega Projects Marty Halloway made a presentation on the $1.995 million in federal directed funding that is already allocated for the sections from Grundy, Va. to the West Virginia state line, indicating the pre-engineering monies included in the recent federal budget will be used toward identifying roadway considerations, including:

- Conceptual alignments, grades and profiles;
- Surface and mineral owners;
- Surface mines and deep mine works;
- Selection of typical sections, design speed and number of lanes;
- Evaluation of climbing lanes and truck escape ramps needs;
- Calculation of potential earthwork volumes;
- Development of pavement design; and
- Development of scoping level estimates.

Environmental impacts will also be examined and will include the identification of stream and wetlands impacts; cultural resources to avoid environmentally sensitive areas; any threatened or endangered species present; noise or air considerations, community planning; and impact to forest cover.

Additionally, the pre-engineering work outlined will examine potential spoil/waste areas; major coal seams; bridges and major culverts; utilities and gas wells; and GOB piles.

“This project will have the two tallest bridges, the deepest fill, the deepest cut and the longest pre-cast culvert within a 10-mile area in Virginia,” Halloway said.

Halloway also showed a map which detailed interstate connectivity once the expressway is built. Specifically, that map showed the project, when complete, will provide better access to four interstates, including I-81 in Bristol; I-77 in Beckley WV; I-64 in Ashland, Ky.; and I-26 in Kingsport, Tenn.

In addition to hearing the updates on the project at Thursday’s meeting, board members also welcomed Philip Cook as a new member to the board, representing Buchanan County.

About the Virginia Coalfields Expressway Authority: The Virginia Coalfields Expressway Authority was formed by the Virginia General Assembly in 2017 to improve the transportation into, from, within and through Southwest Virginia; to assist in regional economic development; and to generally enhance highway safety in the affected localities of Southwest Virginia. The Coalfields Expressway, designated as U.S. Route 121 and a Congressional High Priority Corridor, is a proposed limited-access highway to provide a modern, safe and efficient transportation artery through the coalfields region of far Southwest Virginia and southern West Virginia. The Virginia Coalfield Economic Development Authority provides staff support to the authority board. www.vceda.us/cfxauthority.

###

Virginia CFX Authority Board Hears Project Updates

Virginia Coalfields Expressway Authority members listen to an update on the Coalfields Expressway project during a meeting of the authority held December 9, 2022 in Lebanon.

LEBANON, VA – DECEMBER 9, 2022 – A letter asking Virginia Governor Glenn Youngkin to consider including $500,000 annually in the state budget for the Virginia Coalfields Expressway (CFX) Authority to help advance the Coalfields Expressway in Virginia has been sent to the governor by Virginia CFX Authority Executive Director Jonathan Belcher.

Belcher told authority members at the December 9 authority board meeting in Lebanon that the letter was sent to the governor in mid-October and in it, he had stressed the need for the roadway.

“I am of the opinion that the Coalfields Expressway may offer the only real solution to the economic plight of many areas of the coalfields,” Belcher said he wrote in the letter. “Without this necessary infrastructure, these areas will continue to struggle economically and that is not even mentioning the tremendous health care and educational opportunities and other benefits the road will provide.”

The Virginia CFX Authority was formed by the General Assembly in 2017 “to improve the transportation into, from, within, and through Southwest Virginia, assist in regional economic development, and generally enhance highway safety in the affected localities” of Southwest Virginia. Belcher noted when the General Assembly first formed the authority, no funding was provided for it, leaving the authority unfunded to this date.

“This has created a considerable challenge to the authority being able to meet its mission,” Belcher wrote in the letter.

“I know you recognize the importance of the Coalfields Expressway (U.S. 121) because you referenced it during your campaign in the gubernatorial debate held at the Appalachian School of Law in Grundy,” Belcher wrote in the letter to the governor. “The only section of the CFX funded and under construction in Virginia are a few miles shared with U.S. 460 as part of the ‘Corridor Q’ project in Buchanan County. Without the Coalfields Expressway (U.S. 121) being completed in both states, neither state will realize the full benefit.”

The governor’s budget proposals are expected to be released in the next few days. Belcher told board members he remained hopeful funding for the authority would be included in the budget.

Virginia Senator Travis Hackworth, who was in attendance at Friday’s meeting, told authority members he is actively working with the governor’s office and General Assembly leadership to see what he can do from his end in support of the funding request.

Other legislative officials in attendance at Friday’s meeting included Laura Blevins from Sen. Tim Kaine’s office; and Cody Mumpower from Congressman Morgan Griffith’s office.

Authority Member James Keen suggested that if getting funding is successful, the authority’s next step should be to hire an engineering firm to explore where the plans of mining companies align with the needs of the Coalfields Expressway. This would be in furtherance of the coal synergies approach to developing portions of the road which also happen to align with planned mining operations which could leave a rough grade roadbed.

“It’s going to be a difficult task, but we can’t get discouraged,” Virginia CFX Authority Chairman Jay Rife said during the discussion. “This is a long-term project.”

In other business at Friday’s meeting, CFX Authority members elected officers for the coming year including Jay Rife of Buchanan County, who was reelected as chairman; and J.H. Rivers of Wise County, who was reelected as vice chairman.

Members of the authority include Bonnie Bates, Wise County, Speaker of the House Appointee; Philip Cook, Buchanan County, Ex Officio, Buchanan Co. Board of Supervisors; James Keen, Buchanan County, Speaker of the House Appointee; Peggy Kiser, Dickenson County, Ex Officio, Dickenson County Board of Supervisors; Scott Mullins, Dickenson County, Senate Rules Committee Appointee; Jay Rife, Buchanan County, Speaker of the House Appointee; J.H. Rivers, Wise County, Senate Rules Committee Appointee;

Melanie Salyer, Wise County, Speaker of the House Appointee; John Schoolcraft, Wise County, Ex Officio, Wise County Board of Supervisors; and Ed Talbott, Buchanan County, Senate Rules Committee Appointee.

Two Speaker of the House Appointee seats for Dickenson County on the board remain vacant. The Speaker of the House has been contacted and asked to fill the vacancies as soon as possible.

Belcher also provided a brief funding update on the Coalfields Expressway project, noting a congressionally directed funding request of $1.995 million for Grundy to the West Virginia state line pre-engineering was included in the FY22 federal budget.

He noted the Virginia Department of Transportation is currently working on that study.

A congressionally directed funding request of $7 million for paving of additional lanes along the CFX sections of Corridor Q was included in the Senate version of the FY23 federal budget. The House version includes $3.5 million. The final number will be known as soon as the FY23 federal budget is approved at the federal level.

Those funds will be used by VDOT to either pave additional lanes at the US 121/460 intersection and Hawk's Nest sections (2.21 miles of four-lane) or widen the truck climbing lanes on CFX between Routes 744 & 609 (4-5 miles of four-lane).

Belcher noted that completion dates for Corridor Q segments of the roadway are currently projected by VDOT as follows:

• KY state line to Route 744 (Southern Gap) – early fall 2023;

• Route 744 to Route 604 (Poplar Creek) – early 2025; and

• Route 604 (Poplar Creek) to Grundy – late 2027.

Construction of remaining sections in Virginia remain unfunded, Belcher noted, adding West Virginia plans to complete its sections within 10 years.

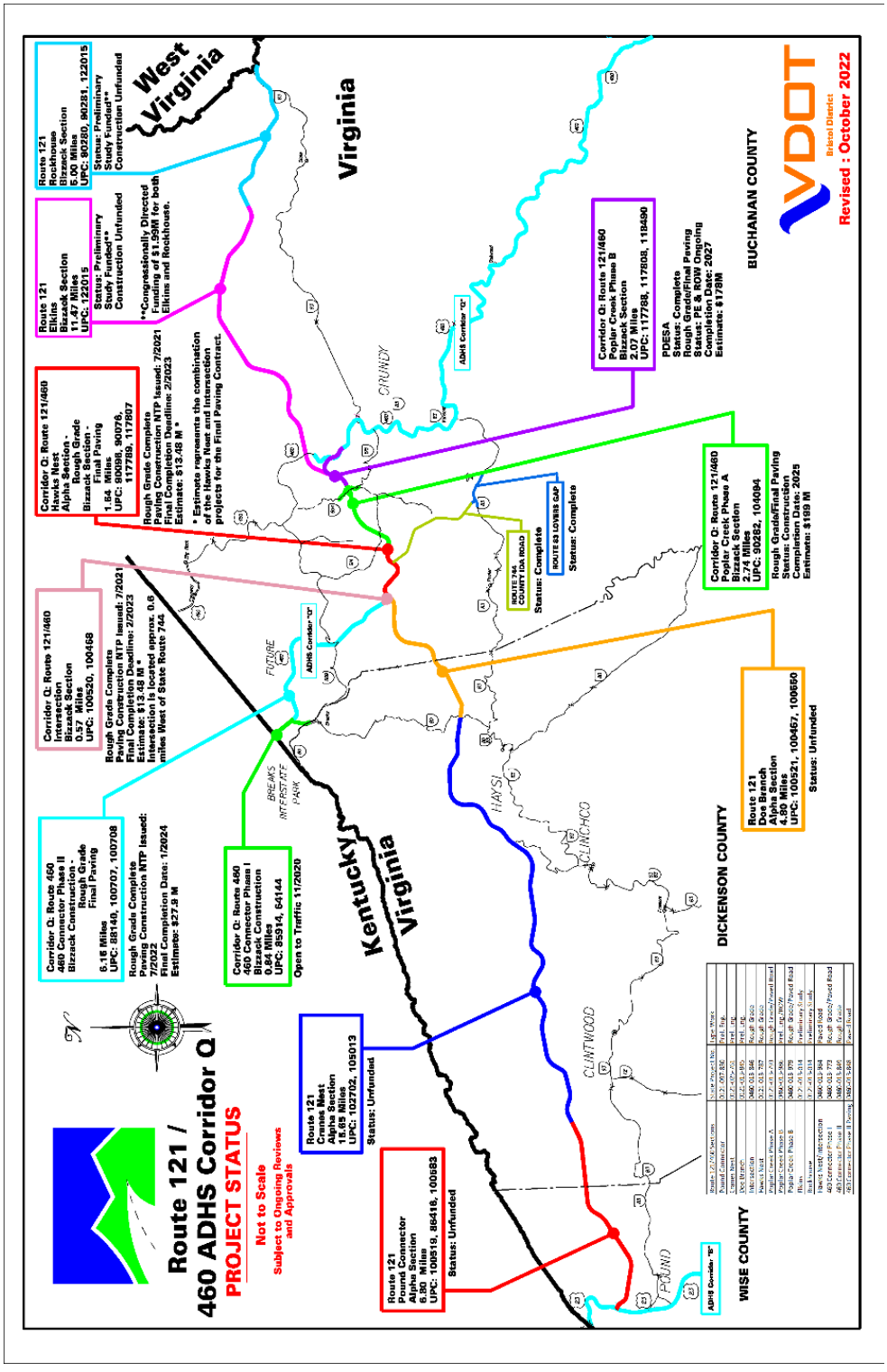
The next meeting of the authority will be held in the spring of 2023.

About the Virginia Coalfields Expressway Authority: The Virginia Coalfields Expressway Authority was formed by the Virginia General Assembly in 2017 to improve the transportation into, from, within and through Southwest Virginia; to assist in regional economic development; and to generally enhance

highway safety in the affected localities of Southwest Virginia. The Coalfields Expressway, designated as U.S. Route 121 and a Congressional High Priority Corridor, is a proposed limited-access highway to provide a modern, safe and efficient transportation artery through the coalfields region of far Southwest Virginia and southern West Virginia. The Virginia Coalfield Economic Development Authority provides staff support to the authority board. www.vceda.us/cfxauthority.

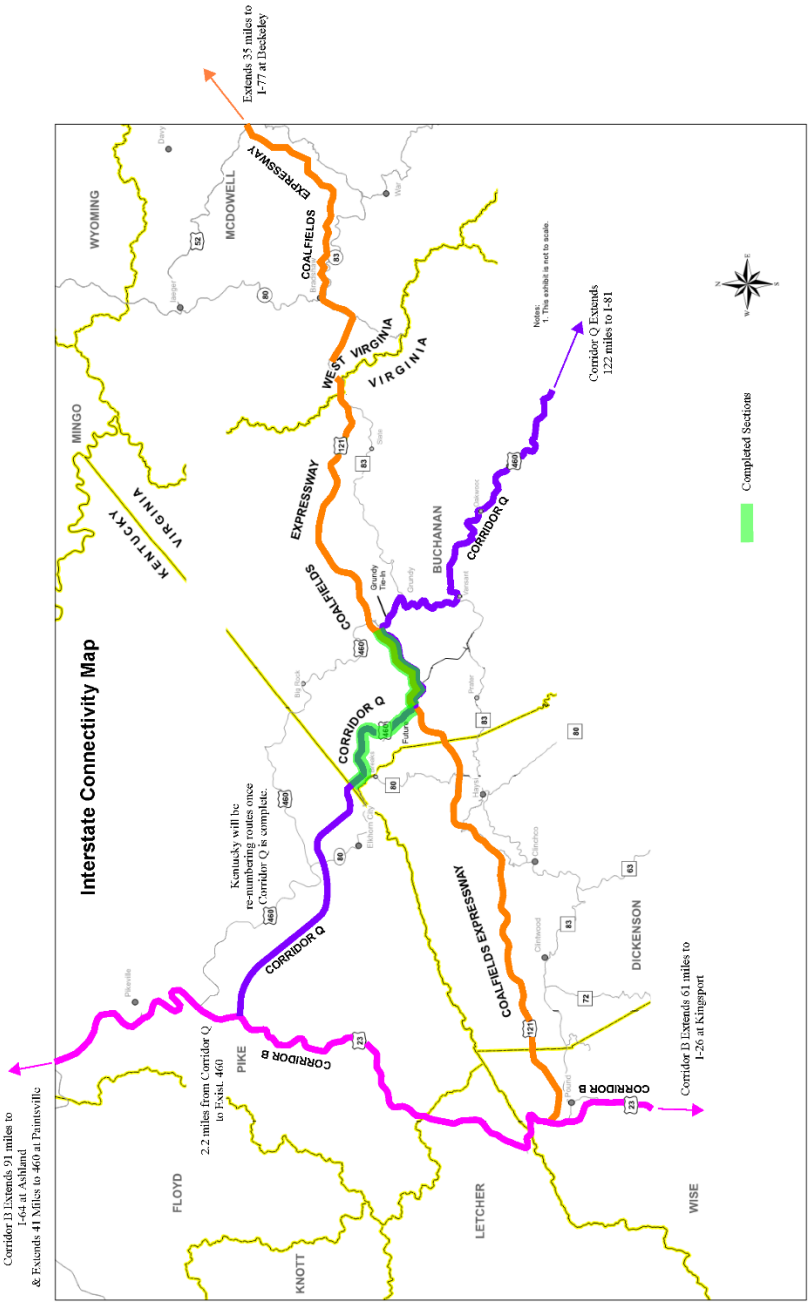
###

Coalfields Expressway Map (Virginia Section)



Source: Virginia Department of Transportation

Coalfields Expressway Interstate Connectivity Map



Source: Virginia Department of Transportation

Contact Information

Virginia Coalfields Expressway Authority
Jonathan Belcher, Executive Director
Email: jonathan@vceda.us
Phone: (276) 889-0381
Web: www.vceda.us/cfxauthority