State Corporation Commission

• The Virginia Constitution of 1902 created the Commission to regulate railroads and telephone and telegraph companies.

• Since then, the General Assembly has broadened the Commission’s authority and responsibilities in many areas.
Railroad Safety

• Governed by the Federal Railroad Safety Act (1970)

• Preempts State authority to adopt safety rules with 2 exceptions. States may:
  
  – Enforce a law/regulation until the subject matter is addressed by the Federal government.
  
  – Enforce more stringent safety laws/regulations if:
    1. it is necessary to eliminate/reduce safety or security hazards.
    2. is not incompatible with laws, regulations or orders of U.S. government.
    3. it does not burden interstate commerce.
State Participation

A State may participate in investigation and surveillance activities necessary to enforce the FRA’s safety regulations through an annual certification as provided by the Railroad Safety Act.
Division of Utility and Railroad Safety

• Responsible for the administration of safety programs involving:
  – Natural gas and hazardous liquid pipeline facilities
  – Underground utility damage prevention
  – Railroad safety
Virginia Railroad Facilities

2014 Inspection Activities*

8,065 Track Units Inspected

16,576 Locomotive and Car Units Inspected

1,972 Operating Practices Units Reviewed

23 Accidents Investigated

*Results of inspections submitted to the Federal Railroad Administration for possible enforcement action
Railroad Safety

- Conduct inspections of:
  - Track
  - Rail Cars and Locomotives
  - Operational Procedures

- Investigate rail accidents

- Submit results to the Federal Railroad Administration for possible enforcement action
Track Defects

- Broken/Split Ties
- Displaced Tie Plate
- Broken Switch
- Fouled Ballast
- Internal Defect
Locomotive and Car Defects

- Worn Wheel Flange
- Defective Handhold
- Broken Coupler
Inspection Area Map
Lynchburg, VA Derailment
Risk-Based Inspections

• 40% of the tracks in Virginia are used for the transportation of:
  – Passengers
  – Hazardous materials

• Have raised inspection frequency
Montgomery, WVA Derailment
Galena, IL Derailment
Division of Utility and Railroad Safety ("URS")
Director: Massoud Tahamtani

SCC Toll Free Number – 800-552-7945
URS Direct Dial Number – 804-371-9980
URS Website – http://www.scc.virginia.gov/urs
Online Complaint Form (Utility) - http://www.scc.virginia.gov/publicforms
Online Complaint Form (Railroad) - http://www.scc.virginia.gov/urs/rr