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Oppose VDOT Safety Rest Area Closures

The Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) recently announced the proposed closure of 25 of the 41 state safety rest areas effective July 2009. VDOT attributes the closures to a tight budget and a move towards its core mission of building and maintaining roads. **The Virginia Chamber of Commerce opposes these closures.**

The Safety Rest Areas (SRA's) see over 45 million visitors a year, with roughly 28 million in the proposed 25 SRA's closures. These closed SRA's would sit along interstates with boarded up windows and blockaded ramps – presenting a significant safety risk for weary travelers and an unwelcoming message to all traveling through Virginia.

Additionally, the Virginia tourism industry is an \$18 billion a year industry, providing millions in tax revenue for the Commonwealth. Closure of these SRA's will negatively impact our tourism businesses. It will deprive them of one of their main marketing tools, attracting in-state travelers, and deprive our communities and the Commonwealth of significant tax revenues. Most importantly, the SRA's closures will demonstrate that Virginia is not a welcoming state to travelers and further signify that we are *not* open for business.

VDOT has announced that it will hold several public hearings across the state throughout March in order to hear comments from the public on this and many other issues. We urge you to attend meetings in your area and speak out against these closures. Meeting dates and locations can be found [here](#). All meetings will begin at 6pm. You may also submit comments via email to vdotinfo@vdot.virginia.gov by April 15, 2009.

Moreover please contact Governor Tim Kaine at kaine@governor.virginia.gov or (804) 786-2211 and urge him to encourage the members of the Commonwealth Transportation Board to vote against these proposals.

For more information, please contact [Dennis Flannery](#).

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