

IN THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF SALEM, VIRGINIA, DECEMBER 9, 2019:

RESOLUTION 1370

In Support of Traffic Incident Management Legislation

- WHEREAS, on November 14, 2018, the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments released a report entitled "Traffic Incident Management in the National Capital Region" which provided seven priority recommendations to improve the quick and safe resolution of traffic incidents region wide; and
- WHEREAS, during the 2019 General Assembly Session, legislation was introduced that would have allowed traffic incident management ("TIM") vehicles owned or operated by the Virginia Department of Transportation to be equipped with flashing lights and sirens; and
- WHEREAS, this legislation would ensure our current transportation infrastructure is utilized in the most safe and efficient manner, and would benefit citizens across the Commonwealth - especially congested regions such as Northern Virginia, Hampton Roads, and the I-81 corridor; and
- WHEREAS, the prompt arrival of TIM professionals has been shown in other states to significantly alleviate traffic congestion, and improve safety by mitigating secondary crashes; and
- WHEREAS, the smooth flow of traffic improves public safety, and decreases safety challenges and costs for commuters and, ultimately, the economy.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Council of the City of Salem hereby supports, and encourages other local governments to support, legislation in the 2020 General Assembly Session that would allow traffic incident management vehicles along Statewide Safety Service Patrol Routes to be equipped with flashing lights and sirens.

Upon a call for an aye and a nay vote, the same stood as follows:

John E. Saunders –
James A. Martin –
William D. Jones –
Jane W. Johnson –
Byron Randolph Foley –

ATTEST:

James E. Taliaferro, II
Clerk of Council
City of Salem, Virginia



Loudoun County, Virginia

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November 5, 2019

Mr. Jay Taliaferro
City of Salem
City Hall, 114 North Broad Street
Salem, Virginia 24153

Dear Mr. Taliaferro,

Our Board of Supervisors respectfully requests that the City of Salem consider adopting a resolution of support, as attached, for an upcoming bill in the Virginia General Assembly session concerning safety on our highways.


Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) safety service patrol vehicles, also known as traffic incident management (TIM) vehicles, operate on the I-95 corridor, I-495 corridor, I-295 corridor, most of the I-81 and I-64 corridor, and part of the I-77 corridor. TIM vehicles are dispatched by VDOT Transportation Operation Centers or Virginia State Police dispatchers to support first responders by clearing major accidents. VDOT currently uses amber lights for TIM vehicles, and are frequently delayed in responding due to traffic which does not yield the right of way to amber lighted vehicles. Proposed legislation would authorize TIM vehicles to be (i) equipped with flashing red or red and white warning lights, (ii) exempt from certain traffic regulations in particular situations, and (iii) equipped with a siren, exhaust whistle, or air horn. The proposed legislation would also add TIM vehicles to the list of stopped vehicles for which the operator of a motor vehicle must move over or proceed with caution. The legislation would also require TIM drivers to undergo an emergency vehicle operators course from an approved list provided by the Department of Fire Programs, Office of Emergency Medical Services, or equivalent agency and be recertified as an emergency vehicle operator every five years. Similar legislation, [HB 2594](#), passed the House of Delegates 99-0 during the 2019 General Assembly Session and narrowly failed by one vote in the Senate Transportation Committee.

TIM vehicles, in states that already have this authority, have been shown to reduce response times by 50 percent. The Maryland Department of Transportation, which has emergency lighting and sirens on vehicles, has identified an average response time of 7.5 minutes per incident, while VDOT currently averages 14 minutes. Prompt arrival of TIM professionals, facilitated by emergency vehicle responses, alleviates traffic congestion. For each minute an incident negatively impacts a travel lane, approximately 4 additional minutes are statistically required to return travel volumes to pre-crash values. Delays have increased safety challenges, cost significant commuter hours, and greatly increased costs. Finally, this bill mitigates secondary crashes. Prompt arrival of TIM vehicles will positively impact traffic congestion and life safety. We have been working extensively with VDOT, public safety agencies and first responders to ensure that this initiative receives appropriate stakeholder support. Support from localities, particularly those in these often congested Interstate corridors where the TIM

program is operational but hindered without this additional authority, would be very helpful in communicating the importance of this issue to state elected officials. The Washington Region Council of Governments, representing Northern Virginia localities and the entire D.C. Metro region, has already been actively engaged in advocacy efforts for this important public safety measure.

We hope you will consider supporting this resolution. Upon adoption, we would appreciate receiving a copy in order to demonstrate support for our lawmakers in Richmond. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Anne Lewis, Assistant County Administrator or Gwen Kennedy, Legislative Liaison at 703-777-0200.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Tim Hemstreet', is written over a horizontal line.

Tim Hemstreet
County Administrator

Attachment (1)