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New River Valley
Planning District Commission

6580 Valley Center Drive, Suite 124
Radford, Virginia 24141
Tel (540) 639-9313
Fax (540) 831-6093
e-mail: nrvpdc@nrvpdc.org
Visit: www.nrvpdc.org

MEMORANDUM

To: **NRV Local Government Managers**

From: **Kevin R. Byrd, Executive Director**

Date: **November 13, 2014**

Re: **Commission Name Change Request**

The New River Valley Planning District Commission Board of Directors is requesting the member governing bodies consider the attached resolution of support to change the Commission's name to the New River Valley Regional Commission. This request is being distributed to all 14 members of the Commission following a unanimous vote of the Commission Board of Directors at their October 23, 2014 meeting. The Commission would appreciate a response to this request prior to February, 2015. I am available to attend local government meetings as needed to address any questions pertaining to this request.

The name change being proposed is a result of a recommendation from an agency assessment conducted in 2012. The assessment process engaged all Commission members and involved focus groups with leaders in all four counties, the city and higher education representatives. The assessment also included a survey distributed to over 200 people in the region. The assessment report summarized eight implementation stratgies with the name change being one. Since the assessement in 2012 the Commission Board of Directors has worked diligently to implement the recommended stratgies including methods to increase communication with members; convening the region on topics of interest; coordinating Mayors/Chairs meetings; revise the Annual Dinner format to include elected officials; engage Commissioners in the work of the agency through committees and participating in regional programs; and evaluate means to deliver value-added GIS services. Much progress has been made on the recommended strategies and the Commission Board of Directors determined the timing is appropriate to pursue the name change.

The Code of Virginia (15.2-4203 B.1) enables two other naming options aside from Planning District Commission which include Regional Commission or Regional Council. Seven regions out of 21 in Virginia utilize a name other than Planning District Commission.

The Commission is requesting the change to better reflect the overall mission and actions of the agency as a regional body serving the New River Valley. The Commission routinely provides services beyond planning and the name is often mistaken for local government Planning Commissions. Lastly, the purpose and function of the Commission will not change, while the new name offers better alignment with the intended purpose of regional collaboration, convening, visioning and service delivery.