

NORTHERN VIRGINIA TRANSPORTATION COALITION

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May 28, 2010

The Honorable Jay Fisetto, Chairman
Arlington County Board
2100 Clarendon Blvd. Suite 300
Arlington, Virginia 22201

Dear Chairman Fisetto:

The undersigned request that the Arlington County Board withdraw its I-95/I-395 HOT Lanes project lawsuit and work with the Commonwealth of Virginia to advance this critical regional project.

I-95/I-395 is a major gateway to the nation's capital, part of the east coast's primary north-south corridor, and a major regional multi-modal facility and evacuation route. Severe weekday and weekend congestion is commonplace.

More than 250,000 vehicles pass daily through the Springfield Interchange. By 2030 that number is projected to exceed 300,000.

Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) re-locations will bring 6,500 new workers to Mark Center and 14,000 to the EPG and Fort Belvoir Main Post in the next year. The corridor serves five major military sites.

The existing HOV system is growing increasingly congested and less reliable and Arlington County has voted previously to include the HOT Lanes project in the region's plan.

No federal or state dollars to improve this facility are currently available or likely for the foreseeable future. Absent major improvements, the impact on the hundreds of thousands of travelers that depend upon this corridor daily as well as those who live in adjacent Arlington communities will be severe.

A private sector consortium has stepped forward with a proposal to invest upwards of \$1 billion in private equity and debt to construct a 37-mile Express Bus/HOV/Toll facility in the median of the corridor from Stafford County to Eads Street near the Pentagon. The facility will provide free travel for transit and carpool vehicles and variable toll use for single occupant vehicles. In addition to new lanes and access ramps, the proposal provides substantial funding for the purchase and operation of new buses and routes, 3,000 satellite parking spaces and transportation management programs. When complete, the facility will offer seamless travel at faster, more predictable speeds in the I-95/I-395 corridor as well as to Tysons Corner via the I-495 HOT Lanes facility. Traffic diverted to the new facility will create additional space and improve travel speeds for those using the conventional lanes. The HOV lanes will operate better than they do today and support increases in carpooling and buses.

The importance of the upgrading and extension of the I-95 HOV system for regional evacuation purposes cannot be overstated.

The primary obstacle to advancing this innovative, multi-modal improvement is the Arlington County Board's lawsuit that precludes the project from securing any private or public sector funding. Common sense dictates that a project constructed within the median of an existing 10-lane interstate highway would not require a full Environmental Impact Statement. Charges that the Obama administration and Governor Tim Kaine's Secretary of Transportation acted with the "implicit intent" to harm minority and vulnerable populations and benefit predominantly Caucasian Virginians are not credible and frankly an embarrassment to this region.

The Virginia Department of Transportation is on record as expressing its willingness to re-examine design and access issues, but the Commonwealth cannot re-engage until the legal action goes away.

cc: The Honorable Robert F. McDonnell
Commonwealth Transportation Board Members
Northern Virginia General Assembly Delegation

The Honorable Sean T. Connaughton
Northern Virginia Congressional Delegation
Northern Virginia Transportation Authority Members

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