



MONTGOMERY COUNTY COUNCIL  
ROCKVILLE, MARYLAND



FAIRFAX BOARD OF SUPERVISORS  
FAIRFAX, VIRGINIA

October 19, 2015

The Honorable Lawrence J. Hogan  
State House  
100 State Circle  
Annapolis, MD 21401

The Honorable Terence R. McAuliffe  
Governor of Virginia  
P.O. Box 1475  
Richmond, VA 23218

The Honorable Pete K. Rahn  
Maryland Department of Transportation  
P.O. Box 548  
7201 Corporate Center Drive  
Hanover, MD 21076

The Honorable Aubrey L. Layne, Jr.  
Secretary of Transportation  
Patrick Henry Building  
1111 East Broad Street, Third Floor  
Richmond, VA 23218

Dear Governor Hogan, Governor McAuliffe, Secretary Rahn, and Secretary Layne,

As members of the Montgomery County Council and Fairfax County Board of Supervisors, we write today to ask that the Maryland and Virginia Departments of Transportation come together and focus on making improvements to address the severe congestion problems at the American Legion Bridge.

As you certainly appreciate, the American Legion Bridge is a vital transportation and economic link for not only Fairfax and Montgomery, but for Maryland and Virginia and, in some ways, the entire East Coast. And today, it is a choke point that has serious negative consequences for our economies, our environment, and our quality of life.

Every day, nearly 300,000 vehicles cross over the tremendously congested bridge, making it the single most-utilized Potomac River crossing in the region. As cars sit in traffic, there are currently no mass transit alternatives across the Bridge. During the afternoon rush, average vehicle speeds slow to 34.9 mph on the Outer Loop and 22.5 mph on the Inner Loop. And while Virginia has made a series of improvements on I-495 to help ease congestion, until we collectively address the bridge itself, cars will remain stuck in gridlock.

In 2012 the Montgomery County Council and the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors requested MDOT and VDOT to add two lanes to the Beltway from the I-270 West Spur to Virginia for high-occupancy-toll (HOT) lanes, which is substantially consistent with the Commonwealth of Virginia Transportation Board's recent call to extend its Beltway express toll lanes into Maryland. Presumably this could be evaluated as part of the \$6 million study in MDOT's Consolidated Transportation Program for this segment of the Beltway (as well as lower I-270). At that time we also urged MDOT

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and VDOT to provide, in the short-term, transit priority on the seven-mile segment of the Beltway between the southern terminus of the I-270 West Spur HOV lanes and the Dulles Access Road, where Virginia's express toll lanes currently begin. However, in the last three years we have seen little or no action on either request. **We repeat these two requests; the need to address this problem is now more urgent than ever.**

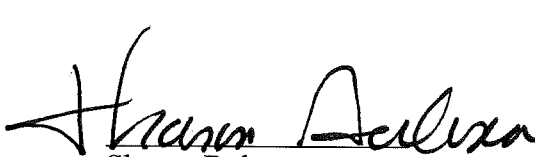
While we appreciate that there is some interest in pursuing a second crossing of the Potomac, the fact is, according to Virginia's "Morning Commuter Traffic Crossing American Legion Bridge" study, a significant percentage of Bridge commuters are headed for destinations along, or within, the Beltway corridor. These motorists would be best served by improvements to the existing American Legion Bridge.


Moreover, in a time of very constrained fiscal realities, making improvements to the American Legion Bridge will allow us to more cost-effectively address our traffic challenges. We believe it is critical for Maryland and Virginia to focus our resources on what we can realistically achieve in the near term.


Our communities are prepared to work closely with you to improve mobility on American Legion Bridge and create the necessary space for transit alternatives between the counties. We ask that our two states work together so that we can move forward on the necessary and appropriate improvements to this vital highway link.


Thank you for your consideration of this issue. We look forward to your response.

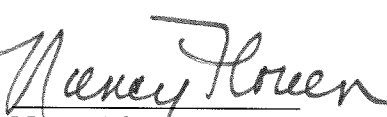
Sincerely,


  
Sharon Bulova  
Chairman  
Fairfax Board of Supervisor


  
Roger Berliner  
Chair, T&E Committee  
Montgomery County Council

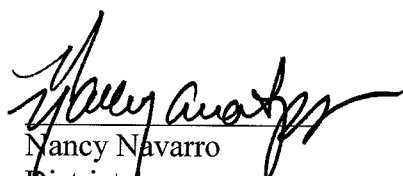
  
George Leventhal  
President  
Montgomery County Council

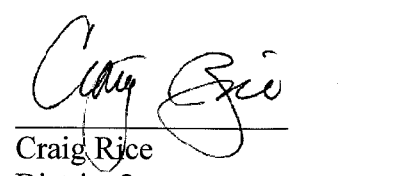
  
Marc Elrich  
At-Large  
Montgomery County Council

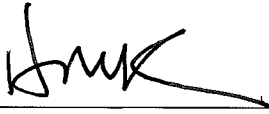
  
Nancy Floreen  
At-Large  
Montgomery County Council

  
Tom Hucker  
District 5  
Montgomery County Council

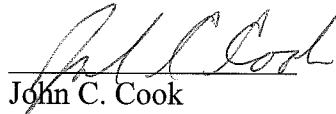
  
Sidney Katz  
District 3  
Montgomery County Council

  
Nancy Navarro  
District 4  
Montgomery County Council

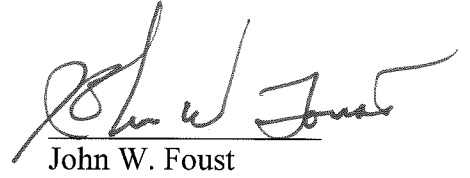
  
Craig Rice  
District 2  
Montgomery County Council



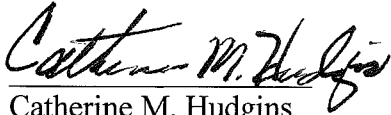
Hans Riemer  
At-Large  
Montgomery County Council



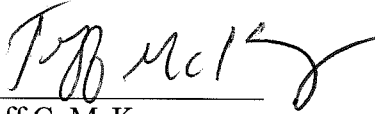
John C. Cook  
Braddock District  
Fairfax Board of Supervisors




John W. Foust  
Dranesville District  
Fairfax Board of Supervisors



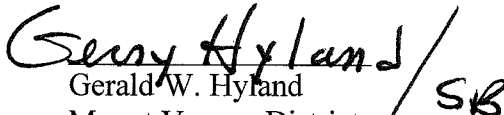
Catherine M. Hudgins  
Hunter Mill District  
Fairfax Board of Supervisors



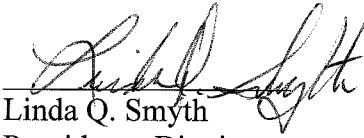
Jeff C. McKay  
Lee District  
Fairfax Board of Supervisors



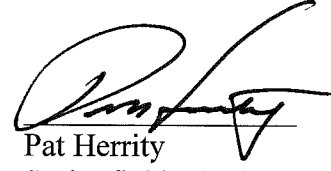
Penelope A. Gross  
Vice Chairman  
Fairfax Board of Supervisors



Gerald W. Hyland  
Mount Vernon District  
Fairfax Board of Supervisors



Linda Q. Smyth  
Providence District  
Fairfax Board of Supervisors



Pat Herrity  
Springfield District  
Fairfax Board of Supervisors



Michael R. Frey  
Sully District  
Fairfax Board of Supervisors

CC: Gregory C. Johnson, Administrator, State Highway Administration, MDOT