



Bi-County Partnership

January 27, 2014

The Honorable S. Chris Jones
Chairman, House Appropriations Committee
General Assembly Building, Room 523
Richmond, Virginia 23219

Dear Chairman Jones:

As members of the Bi-County Partnership, a coalition of eleven organizations representing employers in Loudoun and Prince William Counties and the Dulles region, we write in strong opposition to several amendments (Items 444#1h, #5h, #6h and Item 449#1h by Del. Hugo and Items 4-5.12#1h, #2h, #3h, #4h and #5h by Del. Marshall) offered to the biannual budget (HB 30) that would unnecessarily interfere with the design and construction of the vitally needed Bi-County Parkway (BCP) in northern Virginia. We urge the Committee to reject these amendments.

The Bi-County Parkway is vital to our communities' economic opportunity and prosperity. It is a key "missing link" in the regional transportation network, the need for which has been well documented by the current Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and previous state, regional and local studies. It has appeared on the Loudoun and Prince William comprehensive plan, the Northern Virginia Transportation Authority's and the National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board's regional plans and Virginia's Statewide Transportation Plan for years. It is an integral part of the Commonwealth's Northern Virginia North-South Corridor of Statewide Significance, the result of a Corridors of Statewide Significance process based on legislation (HB 2119) enacted in 2009 by votes of 96-0 in the House of Del. s and 39-0 in the Virginia Senate.

Loudoun and Prince William Counties are two of the fastest growing jurisdictions in the United States. By 2040 their current combined population (800,000) is projected to increase by nearly 50 percent. Job growth will exceed population growth by a nearly two to one margin and intercounty travel between Loudoun and Prince William is forecast to increase by 91 percent. The existing local road network (e.g. US 15 and Gum Spring Road) is woefully inadequate to meet these projected needs. Built decades ago and improved only slightly as both counties have rapidly grown over the past two decades, these two-lane rural roads are increasingly overwhelmed today and will only grow more so. To the east of the immediate Bi-County Parkway area, Route 28 – the other principal north-south link – typically backs up 10 miles to the north of I-66 each evening and is congested for approximately six hours of the working day – costing the regional economy an estimated \$400 million a year through lost time and productivity. The need for a new north-south connection in Northern Virginia is unequivocal; which is precisely why the Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB) established the Northern Virginia North-South Corridor of Statewide Significance, of which the BCP is one small segment.

In addition, Washington Dulles International Airport is widely recognized as one of the Commonwealth's most important economic engines, generating nearly 100,000 jobs and \$435 million annually in federal, state and local tax revenues in our region. But inefficient and severely limited access from the north, south and west restricts Virginia's ability to extract the full economic gain from the airport and its increasingly important global links.

Robert Clapper
President and CEO
Prince William Chamber of Commerce

Jim Corcoran
President and CEO
Fairfax County Chamber of Commerce

Tony Howard
President
Loudoun County Chamber of Commerce

Don Owens, Chairman
Eileen Curtis, President
Dulles Regional Chamber of Commerce

Robert Chase
President
Northern Virginia Transportation Alliance

Anita Grazer
President
Committee for Dulles

Jim Larsen
Executive Director
Dulles Area Transportation Association

Keith Meurlin
President
Foreign Trade Zone - 137

Scott C. Plein
President
Dulles South Alliance

Leo Schefer
President
Washington Airports Task Force

Eric Wells
President
Mercure Business Park Association

By providing better access to Dulles Airport, surrounding employers and the region's major population centers, the Bi-County Parkway makes Loudoun County and Western Prince William more viable locations for corporate headquarters, and better paying jobs.

In terms of our national heritage, building the BCP will divert and provide a safer, better alternative for 25,000 daily trips that currently cut through the Manassas National Battlefield Park (MNBFP) and thus protect this valued historic asset.

In recent months, we have heard, as have you, a chorus of "complaints" about the BCP. Placed in the context of a population of 800,000, the opposition level is extremely small and many of the original concerns have been addressed. However, opposition to key regional transportation investments is not uncommon in Northern Virginia. The new Woodrow Wilson Bridge and Capital Beltway Express Lanes as well as the Fairfax County Parkway, I-66, and virtually every public works project upon which Northern Virginia's economy depends experienced similarly small, but extremely active levels of opposition.

We can assure you that the BCP does enjoy wide spread support from residents, businesses and elected officials in Loudoun and Prince William Counties. As noted previously, the BCP has been on the Comprehensive Plans of both Loudoun and Prince William Counties for decades. In fact, the Loudoun County Board of Supervisors recently unanimously approved a statement of support for the project in their 2014 General Assembly Legislative Program and the Prince William County Board of Supervisors recently rejected a proposal to strip the project from their Comprehensive Plan.

Northern Virginia experiences the nation's worst traffic congestion not for lack of planning, but due to the failure to build planned, necessary strategic transportation infrastructure. Repeating this mistake by stopping BCP construction, will NOT stop projected population and travel increases. However, it will most certainly degrade our quality of life and the attraction of good paying jobs that our communities need and diminish severely Dulles Airport from achieving its economic potential.

In summary, the Bi-County Parkway is vital to our communities' economic opportunity and prosperity. Its need has been well documented by the current EIS and previous studies. It has appeared on local, regional and state plans for years. The General Assembly, in part, created the CTB and the Corridors of Statewide Significance process to take politics out of the equation so that transportation projects could be evaluated on the facts and what is in the best interests of the Commonwealth. We believe that CTB has done an excellent job in this regard, that the Northern Virginia North-South Corridor of Statewide Significance meets the established standards and that the Bi-County Parkway is an integral part of that Corridor. We respectfully urge the Committee to reject the proposed Bi-County Parkway Amendments to the budget and allow the Bi-County Parkway to move forward in the CTB and federally proscribed environmental review and approval process.

We would be happy to meet with you or staff from your office to share more information on the need to move forward with the Bi-County Parkway at your convenience. In the meantime, we again respectfully urge you to reject the proposed Bi-County Parkway Amendments to the budget. Thank you.

Sincerely,



Robert Clapper, President and CEO
Prince William Chamber of Commerce



Mark C. Looney, Chairman
Northern Virginia Transportation Alliance



Eileen Curtis, President



Dulles Regional Chamber of Commerce



Anita Grazer, President
Committee for Dulles



Anthony J. Howard, President and CEO
Loudoun County Chamber of Commerce



Jim Larsen, Executive Director
Dulles Area Transportation Association

Cc: Speaker William J. Howell
Members, House Appropriations Committee

- Del. Del. Riley E. Ingram
- Del. M. Kirkland Cox
- Del. R. Steven Landes
- Del. John M. O'Bannon, III
- Del. L. Scott Lingamfelter
- Del. Charles D. Poindexter
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Keith Meurlin, President
Foreign Trade Zone – 137



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