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June 5, 2006

The Honorable Pierce Homer  
Secretary of Transportation  
Commonwealth of Virginia  
1401 East Broad Street  
Richmond, Virginia 23219

Dear Secretary Homer:

I am writing at the request of the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors to provide comments to you regarding the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) for the widening of the Capital Beltway (I-495) from the American Legion Bridge to the Springfield Interchange. The Board reviewed this matter at its June 5, 2006, meeting. In light of the Commonwealth's agreement with Fluor Transurban to design and construct High Occupancy Toll (HOT) lanes, the Board would like to ensure that the Department is aware of its comments and concerns as Fluor Transurban moves forward to complete the in-depth traffic and revenue study and additional detailed engineering following Federal Highway Administration's issuance of a Record of Decision.

The development of a preferred alternative has been a long and difficult process. However it is clear when reflecting on where the process started -- from the original design concepts, with their extensive impacts to homes and businesses and multi-billion dollar public costs -- to where the project is today -- with a preferred design that requires the taking of only a few homes and proposes public-private funding through the use of a HOT lanes concept -- that major strides have been made toward addressing critical transportation needs of the region in a creative and fiscally responsible manner. Many times Fairfax County residents and the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors, representing them, have provided input to the process at various stages of project development and the majority of these concerns have been addressed by the Department. Although the Board has previously made these comments, we have supported the current preferred alternative while recognizing that some details will need to be refined in the next stage.

The Board asks that you consider the following as you proceed forward:

- The efficient operation, convenience, and availability of access to and from the proposed Capital Beltway HOT lanes directly into the Tysons Corner area is extremely important to encourage the use of the facility by high occupancy vehicles, to accommodate improved transit service to the area, and to maintain the economic vitality of the area. Alternatives to the proposed access within the Route 123 interchange should be fully explored, including additional or alternate access to Jones Branch Drive. Any changes to access from that proposed in the FEIS should be fully coordinated with the County and adjacent property owners.

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- An integrated approach needs to be developed for public transit to be fully incorporated into the HOT lanes initiative. Connections should be incorporated to provide access between the Metrorail stations in Franconia-Springfield, Dunn Loring, and Tysons Corner. In addition to design and operational considerations for transit, an allowance for funding transit service needs to be considered.
- Connections to I-66 outside the Beltway need to be compatible with future improvements to I-66 under study as part of the I-66 Multimodal Transportation and Environmental Study so that adjacent properties are impacted only once.
- Coordination with the State of Maryland regarding their proposals for the Capital Beltway should be continued, to develop a seamless network of managed lanes throughout the region. Without a continuation of the HOT lanes into Maryland, the Board supports a phased construction of the northern terminus constructed to minimize the impact on local roads and residential communities in the vicinity of the currently proposed terminus at Georgetown Pike.
- Because the Capital Beltway currently acts as a barrier to non-motorized transportation options, pedestrians and bicycles must be accommodated at all existing crossings of the Beltway, and connections to adjacent existing and planned trails need to be completed as part of the project.
- Any system for tolling of the HOT lanes should be compatible with the tolling on the Dulles Toll Road, in addition to other proposed facilities in the region. The HOT Lane project should also be compatible with proposed future widening of the Dulles Toll Road/Airport Access Road.

The Board would like to thank the Commonwealth for its responsiveness to the concerns of Fairfax County citizens in the current proposals for reconstruction of the Capital Beltway. We appreciate your support in this and other critical transportation issues in Fairfax County.

Sincerely,



Gerald E. Connolly, Chairman  
Fairfax County Board of Supervisors

cc: Members, Commonwealth Transportation Board  
Members, Fairfax County Board of Supervisors  
Gregory A. Whirley, Acting Commissioner, VDOT  
Anthony H. Griffin, County Executive  
Earl T. Robb, State Environmental Administrator, VDOT  
Dennis C. Morrison, District Administrator, VDOT NOVA  
Katharine D. Ichter, Director, Fairfax County Department of Transportation