

NORTHERN VIRGINIA TRANSPORTATION COALITION

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February 17, 2016

Dear House Appropriations and Senate Finance Committee Members:

Northern Virginia businesses and planners have long recognized that the addition of a third lane on eastbound I-66 inside the Beltway and enhanced transit services are essential to improved regional mobility and economic prosperity. The recent bi-partisan I-66 inside the Beltway compromise is a responsible solution to an obvious problem ignored for too long. Thanks to this compromise, a third eastbound lane can open in 3-4 years, not decades, along with new transit services to unlock one of the region's worst chokepoints. Coupled with the proposed I-66 outside the Beltway project, this is critical to meeting regional and state transportation challenges and economic competitiveness goals.

While not perfect, the bipartisan compromise is far better than anything thought achievable just a few weeks ago. Jeopardizing this tenuous compromise would be a tremendous setback for the region and Commonwealth. Therefore, we urge you to oppose any budget amendments that would alter the compromise agreement or the I-66 outside the Beltway project that we believe could prevent these critical projects from becoming a reality.

Potential amendments that we urge you to **OPPOSE** include:

- Exempting hybrid, clean fuel-plated vehicles from paying tolls to use the new HOT lanes outside and inside the beltway – *Allowing hybrids to use HOT lanes toll-free would: 1) create dual policies in the Northern Virginia region as no hybrid exemption exists for the I-95 and I-495 HOT lanes; 2) create a new privileged group of drivers who were able to secure a clean-fuels tag prior to the sunset of the program in 2011 and can continue to transfer those tags to new hybrid vehicles; 3) create enforcement issues; and 4) alter the financing package for the I-66 outside-the-beltway project, for which the project procurement process has already begun, likely resulting in increased project costs for the Commonwealth.*
- Requiring I-66 inside-the-Beltway tolling to not begin until the widening design is at 100 percent - *The compromise allows tolling to begin at the 30 percent design phase, when the project would go to design-build bid, and allows for the upfront funding of enhanced transit services in the corridor.*
- Requiring that design and construction of the additional lane on I-66 inside the Beltway allow for direct access from I-66 to the West Falls Church Metro Station – *No access exists today and adding such a facility would add extensive cost and delay to the project.*
- Requiring that toll revenue on I-66 inside the Beltway, after obligations to the Toll Facilities Revolving Account are met, shall be dispersed only by the Northern Virginia Transportation Authority – *While we agree that the Northern Virginia Transportation Authority may (ultimately) be a better suited regional body for Northern Virginia transportation planning and implementation purposes, the agreement entered into by the Administration with the region dictates that the Commonwealth Transportation Board disperse and Northern Virginia Transportation Commission program the toll revenues. An amendment to change this would likely endanger the ability of the compromise agreement to move forward.*

We appreciate your commitment to sound transportation policy and improving the mobility of people and goods throughout Virginia. Fixing I-66 the right way as soon as possible will have countless positive impacts throughout the Commonwealth.

Thank you for your consideration of this important issue. We welcome any questions you might have.

Sincerely,

Apartment and Office Building Association

Dulles Regional Chamber of Commerce

Greater Reston Chamber of Commerce

Greater Washington Board of Trade

Heavy Construction Contractors Association

Loudoun County Chamber of Commerce

Mt. Vernon Lee Chamber of Commerce

NAIOP - Northern Virginia: The Commercial Real Estate Development Assoc.

Northern Virginia Chamber Partnership

Northern Virginia Association of Realtors

Northern Virginia Chamber of Commerce

Northern Virginia Transportation Alliance

Prince William Chamber of Commerce