

October 3, 2010

The Honorable Robert McDonnell
Governor
Commonwealth of Virginia
Post Office Box 1475
Richmond, Virginia 23218

Dear Governor McDonnell:

As you are well aware, the transportation situation facing the Hampton Roads region becomes more complex and more congested with each passing day. Continued growth in population, tourism, and international trade – while all signs of a healthy economy – are increasingly straining a transportation system that has not seen any significant addition in capacity since the completion of the Monitor Merrimac Memorial Bridge Tunnel nearly 20 years ago. Despite several attempts to advance transportation priorities in this region, our citizens remain stuck in traffic and the congestion imperils our economic future. Clearly, we are at a crossroads.

Over the past year, this region's leaders have started to make progress on objectively prioritizing the projects that will help address the problem of traffic across Hampton Roads. While the results of that effort will not be finalized until December, early drafts of the report show the Midtown Tunnel/Downtown Tunnel/Martin Luther King Extension to be one of the top, if not the top, priority for this area. This result comes after careful analysis of the economic and technical viability of hundreds of projects. While this is not the only significant infrastructure project needed for this region, it is an incredibly important start for us.

As the leading business organizations and employers in this region, we believe the Midtown Tunnel/Downtown Tunnel/Martin Luther King Extension project will bring both demonstrated improvements in traffic not only in Norfolk and Portsmouth, but also across the region, but it will also signal that the Hampton Roads community is finally serious about doing something to solve our transportation problems. In other words, we need to demonstrate to our citizens, as well as future business prospects, tourists, and those engaged in international trade, that we are serious about planning for a better Hampton Roads. We need to make this project inevitable. The time for debate has ended – let's start building.

The recently concluded audit of the Virginia Department of Transportation showed that there may be additional resources available for transportation in the near

future. We respectfully request that as the decisions are made about how to allocate those funds, you will consider using some of that money to help provide a public contribution toward the Midtown Tunnel/Downtown Tunnel/Martin Luther King Extension project. Such a contribution will not only underscore the state's commitment to the partnership embodied by this project, but will also help lower the toll for users of the project. There is clear regional support for this request – as demonstrated by the recent action of the Hampton Roads Transportation Policy Organization - to request such a contribution as part of its 2011 legislative strategy, and we urge your support.

We look forward to working with you and your administration over the coming months to do what we can to make this project a reality.