



May 24th, 2012

[How Not to Levee Debt](#) - I voted against a last minute request to add a \$50m stormwater bond to the ballot in November for a multitude of reasons.

[Ending the Blight of Illegal Road Signs](#) - Thanks to a change in state law Fairfax County will soon be eligible to remove nuisance signs from our roads, I have asked staff for options of how we can do that cost effectively.

[Lyme Disease Update](#) - Our pilot study on the 4-poster deer bait station is finally under way, a newly released study from Cornell University shows the 4-poster deer bait station produced a 90% reduction in ticks that cause Lyme Disease.

[Avoid Traffic Congestion during High School Graduation Season at George Mason University](#) - Schedule of graduations at the Patriot Center below.

[Springfield Days](#) - Join me and my Labrador Rex at this family friendly annual event!

How Not to Levee Debt

At the May 22 Board of Supervisors' meeting, Supervisor Hyland offered a motion to add a \$30 million Storm Drainage Improvement Bond to the ballot in November. This was in addition to the Parks and Parks Facilities (\$75M), Public Safety(\$55M) , and Libraries (\$25M) bond referendums requests which were unanimously approved. After the initial motion, Supervisor McKay moved to increase the stormwater bond amount by \$20 million bringing the total to \$50 million. This additional debt would go towards

planning and constructing stormwater management structures (a levee) in Huntington (\$30M) and in unknown and unidentified projects in the Lee District and throughout the county (\$20M).

I did not support this additional bond request because a) we had just told the school system this summer we could not afford additional bonding capacity, b) I do not believe it is fiscally prudent to add the capacity based on our current economic climate and debt repayment ratios, c) it may put passage of some of the other bonds in doubt due to the high total debt amount, c) a private solution is available and had not been fully explored, d) the request was last minute, e) the Board had just increased the stormwater tax and f) part of the proposed increase was used to balance the budget.

I recognize that the flooding issue in Huntington does need a solution, however, the Board was told to expect a robust discussion of all options (including the private one) to deal with the flooding problems in Huntington. Instead of a discussion, we received an eleventh hour amendment to add a bond referendum which called for bonding \$30 million, and then later \$50 million, in addition to our already advertised \$155 million bond referendum.

Fortunately the \$20M undocumented last minute amendment to increase the stormwater bond was defeated but the \$30M stormwater bond for Huntington passed by a vote of 6 - 3, with Supervisors Frey and Cook joining me in voting against it. It will be on the ballot this fall.

More on why I voted against this bond:

- **We had just told the school system this summer we could not afford additional bonding capacity and I do not believe we should.** During the budget hearings, and more specifically in joint meetings with the School Board to discuss the Capital Improvement Program, County staff and the Board rejected a request from the School Board to receive an additional \$25 million in bond funding to expedite school renovations which are badly needed. We were told by staff that giving the schools an additional \$25 million would bring us too close to our debt repayment limit. Since then we added \$25M to the Park bond and now a \$30M stormwater bond request. Given our economic uncertainties this is not prudent - nor is it right to tell the schools "no we can't" and then without discussion go add to our own bond package.
- **It may put passage of some of the other bonds in doubt due to the high total debt amount.** Adding the stormwater bond brings the total debt request to \$185M - higher than our typical \$155M request. I believe this may put some of the other much needed and well thought out bond requests in jeopardy.
- **A public/private solution is available and had not been fully explored.** The need to solve the Huntington flooding was discussed by the Board after Tropical Storm Lee. I recognize that the flooding issue in Huntington does need a solution, however, the Board was told to expect a robust discussion of all options (including private one) to deal with the flooding problems in Huntington. Instead of a discussion, we received an eleventh hour amendment to add a bond

referendum. The private solution was not explored and per my conversations with potential developers is available. It would result in higher densities outside the flood zone and returning the flood areas to park land.

- **The request was last minute.** Making a commitment to use tax payers' dollars of this magnitude should always be fully vetted before being committed. Staff was also unsure of the impact on up and downstream properties of the new levee - are we just moving the problem? Ironically, no flooding areas have been identified on any list within the Department of Public Works for immediate emergency funding/solutions much less an additional \$50 million funding solution.
- **The Board had just increased the stormwater tax and part of the proposed increase was used to balance the budget.** We already have a vehicle to deal with stormwater issues - the 2 cent stormwater management tax. This tax was imposed to allocate funding to deal with stormwater management issues and it was staff's original recommendation to deal with Huntington through the stormwater tax. In the FY2013 budget, the stormwater tax was initially advertised to go up by one penny. However, after the budget was advertised and hearings had concluded, the Budget Chairman decided to remove half of that penny, roughly \$10 million a year, to balance the county budget. Now we find ourselves being asked to take on an additional \$30 million in debt to pay for a stormwater project.

The sad part here is that I expect the stormwater bond referendum to fail in November, which it should, and we will have wasted a over a year in identifying a solution to Huntington flooding. We should not wait to begin the pursuit of other options, including a public/private partnership so we won't be left with another last minute request.

Ending the Blight of Illegal Road Signs

The 2011 election cycle saw ninety nine candidates run for office in Fairfax County, and with them many thousands of campaign signs joined the bright yellow Junk B Gone and other advertising signs that litter our median strips and roadways. It is time that Fairfax County move to address these illegally placed signs.

In December, I requested that the Board of Supervisors make a point of fixing this blight on our county. After receiving unanimous approval from the Board, we set to work making the necessary changes to the Fairfax specific loophole in state law. This loophole prevented Fairfax County from enforcing sign laws. Thanks to Delegate Dave Albo, the loophole that has allowed the signs to proliferate in Fairfax County will be closed when his bill goes into effect on July 1st. Under the newly approved state law only signs advertising special events will be allowed and only from Saturdays through Mondays.

With the change in law, Fairfax County can now enter into an agreement with the state to enforce the laws on illegally placed signs. At the Board of Supervisors meeting on May 22, the Board approved my motion to have the County Executive present the Board

options for the removal of signs from the right of way - including leveraging existing resources. The motion also directed the County Attorney to begin drafting an agreement with the Commonwealth Transportation Board to allow Fairfax County to enforce the sign laws and collect the fines.

The Board will discuss these options at the next Transportation Committee meeting and hopefully will set on a course to take action as soon as the new state law takes effect. It is my hope that Fairfax County can finally join the rest of the localities in the state and end the blight of illegal road signs.

An Update on Lyme Disease in Fairfax County

A few weeks ago I had the opportunity to visit one of twenty 4-Poster bait stations deployed throughout the County. These stations are designed to combat Lyme disease by transmitting an insecticide to deer. These stations are a part of a three year long program that the County is piloting. While there is not yet any available preliminary data from our particular program, other programs identical to this have been done across the nation. [An article in the New York Times](#) discusses one such program and points out that a more than 90% reduction in the local tick population was seen after the 4-Poster stations were deployed for three years. It is important to note that the insecticide, which is commonly used in head lice shampoos, does not permeate the hide of the deer and does not impact the meat. While scientists in New York did note that there are many other factors that contribute to the spread of Lyme disease, a dramatic reduction in the number of ticks could cause a drop in the number of Lyme disease cases.

Here in Virginia, thanks to the efforts of Congressman Wolf and Governor McDonnell there has been an increase in awareness of Lyme disease. [The State Health Commissioner released a report](#) last week which advised health professionals to be on the lookout for Lyme disease symptoms. The Commissioner noted that early treatment of possible Lyme disease cases can lead to a quick recovery. The Commissioner also cautioned that early test results could erroneously indicate that the person tested does not have Lyme disease. Early detection and treatment is the best defense against contracting this disease. As always, continue to check yourself for ticks after outdoor activities and if you show symptoms seek medical attention.

Avoid Traffic Congestion during High School Graduation Season at George Mason University

We are rapidly approaching the time of year where GMU hosts the graduation ceremonies for many local high schools. As residents in the area know, this can bring periods of serious traffic congestion in and around campus. GMU has provided a list of dates and times of upcoming graduations that will be held at the Patriot Center and says

to expect the heaviest traffic one hour before and after each ceremony (each of which lasts approximately two hours). Though it is understood that it cannot always be avoided, it is recommended to take alternate routes during these times.

Sunday, June 3
2:30 PM - Paul VI

Friday, June 8
7:00 PM - Garfield

Saturday, June 9
9:30 AM - Hylton
2:30 PM - Forest Park
7:00 PM - Freedom (Prince William County)

Sunday, June 10
3:00 PM - Freedom (Loudoun County)
7:30 PM - Stone Bridge

Monday, June 11
10:00 AM - Park View
2:00 PM - Briar Woods
7:00 PM - Broad Run

Thursday, June 14
9:30 AM - Robinson
2:00 PM - Herndon
7:30 PM - Lee

Friday, June 15
9:30 AM - Lake Braddock
2:00 PM - West Potomac

Saturday, June 16
7:00 PM - Thomas Jefferson

Monday, June 18
9:30 AM - Chantilly
2:00 PM - South County
7:30 PM - Westfield

Tuesday, June 19
9:30 AM - Centreville
2:00 PM - West Springfield
7:30 PM - Oakton

Wednesday, June 20
9:30 AM - Falls Church

Springfield Days 2012

Springfield Days is back again this year from May 31st to June 3rd with their excellent line up of fun events for all of the family. As always there will be events all over the Springfield area including Lake Accotink, South Run REC Center, and the American Legion. Springfield Days is a must see event with a history in our community going back over 20 years.

To see the full schedule of events [click here](#).

I hope to see you there, my Labrador Rex and I will be participating in the Paws on Parade event on June 2nd, feel free to come and say hi!