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Establishment of a Task Force

To consider

A MEALS TAX REFERENDUM

Throughout the past months as this Board and the community have deliberated on the Advertised Fiscal Year 2015 Budget, a number of individuals and organizations have urged us to put the question of a meals tax to the voters.

In the Commonwealth of Virginia towns and cities are permitted to have a meals tax subject to an affirmative vote by the governing body. In Northern Virginia all of the cities and towns around and within Fairfax County have adopted a meals tax.

Counties, however, may establish a meals tax only if a referendum is approved by the voters. The last time this proposal was put on the ballot in Fairfax County was in April 1992. The referendum was not successful.

There has been a growing sentiment during recent years for our Board to once again allow the voters to decide whether or not they wish to avail themselves of this additional source of revenue. Reasons for urging this include the desire to diversify the revenues we have available to fund schools, public safety, parks, libraries and human services. If adopted at the same approximate rate as cities and towns in Northern Virginia, the rate would be 4 percent of the cost of a restaurant meal and would result in revenue of approximately \$88 million.

I am proposing to establish a task force to consider the issue of putting a meals tax to referendum. The mission of the task force will be to recommend to the Board of Supervisors:

- Whether or not to proceed with a referendum for a meals tax;
- If it is the recommendation of the group to do so, the task force should recommend the timing (what year?) for the question to be put to the voters;

- And the task force should return to this Board with a recommendation for how revenue from a meals tax should be used.

I have asked former Board Chairmen Kate Hanley and Tom Davis to co-chair this task force and they have accepted.

I am proposing that the following organizations be invited to participate in the task force and to provide as soon as possible the names of their representative to serve:

- The Republican & Democratic parties
- The Fairfax County Chamber of Commerce
- The Restaurant Association of Metropolitan Washington
- Visit Fairfax
- The Federation of Citizens Associations
- The League of Women Voters
- The Fairfax County Taxpayers Alliance
- The Fairfax County Council of PTAs
- The Fairfax Education Association (FEA)
- The Fairfax County Federation of Teachers (FCFT)
- The Service Employees International Union (SEIU Virginia 512)
- The Park and Library foundations
- The Fairfax County Alliance for Human Services
- Public safety organizations, e.g. Police Employee Pay & Benefits Committee, International Association of Firefighters (IAFF) Local 2068, etc.
- Local/regional chambers, e.g. the Dulles Regional, McLean, Reston, Annandale, Central Fairfax, Mount Vernon/Lee, Asian, Hispanic, etc.

Additionally, Co-chairmen Hanley and Davis may have suggestions for additional membership to the Task Force.

The Task Force is asked to return to the Board of Supervisors with their recommendations by our meeting of **June 17th, 2014.**