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July 16, 2010

The Honorable Richard L. Saslaw
Senate of Virginia
P.O. Box 1856
Springfield, VA 22151-0856

Subject: VDOT Maintenance

Dear Senator Saslaw:

On behalf of the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors, I am writing to you about an issue of great concern to the residents of Fairfax County – the lack of statewide funding for road maintenance in Virginia.

As you may recall, I wrote to members of the Northern Virginia delegation to the General Assembly a little over a year ago (June 29, 2009) expressing concerns about the fact that the level of statewide funding for maintenance had reached a crisis point. Even at that time, routine road maintenance – basic items such as repairing potholes, mowing tall grass, painting visible lane markings and pedestrian crossings, repairing broken concrete curbs and medians, and removing roadside trash -- was no longer being completed at a safe, effective, or adequate level. A year later, the funding situation has become even more dire while the state roadway system is considerably worse, due to another year of neglect of basic maintenance needs and accelerated deterioration due to the snow storms of this past winter.

At its July 13, 2010, meeting, the Board of Supervisors discussed these continuing concerns over the Virginia Department of Transportation's (VDOT's) roadway maintenance program's level of service. Transportation funding has reached such a crisis that the Board felt compelled to issue a "call to action" on the part of the Virginia General Assembly to address funding for this fundamental state government service for the citizens of the Commonwealth. As I am sure you are aware, our mutual constituents share our extreme frustration, not only in the deteriorated transportation system, but also in the lack of any visible progress to resolve or even attempt to meaningfully resolve this issue on the part of state government. This is not simply a Fairfax County issue, but a statewide one. Each day that the state elects not to appropriately address this crisis, long-term costs increase as our roads continue to degrade, creating unsafe conditions for the motoring public, pedestrians, and cyclists.

Let me be clear – this is not in any way a criticism of the state's maintenance forces' efforts. State workers and contractors are doing an extraordinary job with the very limited resources they have available. Rather, this call to action is meant to address the funding crisis that leaves these workers without the resources needed to adequately maintain the state's system of highways and our citizens without a safe, adequate, and functioning roadway system.

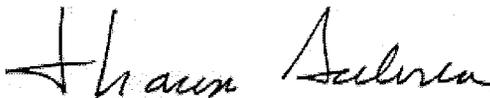
The Board fully understands that the state is in the midst of a budget crisis; however, the current economic downturn is not the cause of the state's transportation woes. While many in our delegation have worked to achieve new, dedicated, sustainable transportation revenues, real transportation solutions will require a statewide effort and willingness by all branches of state government to rise to this challenge. It is this lack of commitment that has created a situation in which Fairfax County will receive less than \$2000 over the next six years for secondary road construction. It has been well know since at least 2003 that increasing maintenance costs would eventually eliminate the availability of funds for construction even with a suppressed level of growth in the expenditure of funds for maintenance.

Something must be done to address this systemic failure. The Fairfax County Board of Supervisors has frequently expressed strong support for transportation funding solutions. While promises were made during the 2010 General Assembly session and recent election campaigns that a special session would be called to address these needs, no such session currently appears to be on the horizon. There is also no evidence at this point that legislators as a group are working in good faith toward resolution of this critical issue.

Maintenance of the Commonwealth's roadway network is essential to maintain and strengthen the economic development that will lead Virginia out of this national recession, as well as ensuring the safety of our residents. We are requesting your action as a member of the Fairfax County delegation to the General Assembly to address the maintenance funding deficiency expeditiously. The resources and authority needed to resolve this crisis rest in the hands of the General Assembly and the leadership of the Executive Branch of state government.

We thank your for your time and attention to this critical matter. The Fairfax County Board of Supervisors stands ready to assist you in this effort and to participate in dialogue needed to reach a sustainable solution.

Sincerely,



Sharon Bulova
Chairman, Fairfax County Board of Supervisors

cc: The Honorable Robert F. McDonnell, Governor, Commonwealth of Virginia
The Honorable William T. Bolling, President of the Senate, Commonwealth of Virginia
The Honorable William J. Howell, Speaker of the House, Commonwealth of Virginia
The Honorable Sean Connaughton, Secretary of Transportation, Commonwealth of Virginia
Members, Board of Supervisors
Anthony H. Griffin, County Executive
Robert A. Stalzer, Deputy County Executive
Catherine Chianese, Assistant County Executive
Katharine D. Ichter, Director, Fairfax County Department of Transportation
Susan E. Mittereder, Legislative Director
Morteza Salehi, District Administrator, Virginia Department of Transportation