



COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA  
**COUNTY OF FAIRFAX**



Telephone (703) 971-6262  
Fax (703) 971-3032  
E-mail: leedist@fairfaxcounty.gov  
Web site: www.fairfaxcounty.gov/lee

6121 Franconia Road  
Alexandria, VA 22310

**JEFFREY C. MCKAY**  
**LEE DISTRICT SUPERVISOR**

## **Board Matter**

**December 6, 2011**

Madam Chairman--The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 included a provision that temporarily increased the monthly tax exclusion amount for employer-provided commuter transit benefits from \$120 to \$230 per month, which was equal to tax-free parking benefits already available to commuters who drive. Both employees and their employers see a reduction in their tax liability because of this provision.

The transit benefit increase is set to expire on December 31, 2011. At that time, the transit benefit will drop to \$125. At the same time, the parking benefit will actually increase to \$240 due to inflation. Failure to extend the parity of this benefit would have a significant negative impact on County residents and will deter transit ridership, having an equally negative impact on our local and regional transit systems. Further, as the majority of County transit riders have vehicles available, a reduction in these benefits may result in more members of the workforce driving, thereby worsening the already substantial congestion on Northern Virginia's roads.

Legislation that would require parity between transit and parking benefits, entitled the Commuter Benefits Equity Act, has been introduced in both the

Senate and House of Representatives and Congressmen Gerald Connolly and James Moran are both co-sponsors of the legislation. However, neither bill has been considered by their respective chambers.

Therefore, Madam Chairman, I move that the Board approve sending the attached letter to Fairfax County's Federal delegation requesting that they work to pass legislation to extend the higher commuter tax benefit and to support the legislation creating permanent parity.

P:\WPDOC\Board Matters\Linda 2011\Federal Transit Benefits.doc