

**350 Loudoun ♦ Aldie Heritage Association ♦ Anacostia Watershed Society  
Chapman Forest Foundation ♦ Goose Creek Association ♦ Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy  
Maryland Conservation Council ♦ Mattawoman Watershed Society  
Nature Abounds ♦ Potomac Conservancy ♦ Prince William Conservation Alliance  
National Wildlife Federation, Mid Atlantic Region Center  
Shenandoah Valley Network ♦ Southern Environmental Law Center  
The Coalition for Smarter Growth ♦ The Piedmont Environmental Council  
Virginia Chapter of the Sierra Club ♦ Virginia Conservation Network  
Virginia League of Conservation Voters**

November 20, 2013

Terry McAuliffe, Governor-Elect  
Commonwealth of Virginia  
1001 E. Broad Street, Suite 305  
P.O. Box 426  
Richmond, VA 23218-0426

**Re: Pulling the Plug on the Bi-County Parkway and North-South Corridor**

Dear Governor-Elect McAuliffe:

Congratulations on your victory and thank you for your support for so many of our conservation and smart growth priorities. With regard to transportation, we are particularly pleased with your support for building sustainable communities, seeking the least intrusive solutions, adapting infrastructure to serve community needs, and commitment to “pulling the plug” on transportation projects that fail to meet these standards.

In keeping with those priorities, we are writing this joint letter to you to urge you to reject the McDonnell administration's proposed Bi-County Parkway and associated North-South Corridor. The Bi-County Parkway is not just a road project -- **it is *the* project in Northern Virginia that would have the largest negative impact on the environment.**

Building the Bi-County Parkway would be a significant blow to our efforts to restore the Chesapeake Bay and would increase pollution that causes climate change and fouls the air that our children breathe. In addition, it would have an immediate detrimental impact on the surrounding community, and undermine the progress that is being made as a result of the investment in the Silver Line Metro and the courageous redevelopment of Tyson's Corner.

Building the Bi-County Parkway would be doubly tragic because there are so many alternatives to solving the transportation problems in the region, many of which we list below, that do not have these fundamental negative impacts.

Here are additional details on why this project is such a bad deal for Virginia:

- **Water quality and the Chesapeake Bay:** Building the Bi-County Parkway would trigger a new speculative real estate development push in Loudoun, Prince William, Fauquier and Stafford Counties. This conversion of rural land to scattered subdivisions, roads, and strip commercial development would make it nearly impossible for Virginia to achieve improvements in local water quality or make gains restoring the Chesapeake Bay.

In the immediate area of the proposed highway, there are 50,000-100,000 acres of rural and relatively undeveloped land, most of which is the headwaters for the Bull Run watershed, a major source of the Occoquan Reservoir. The Occoquan is a key component of the regional water supply for Northern Virginia; every effort has to be made to maintain and improve water quality in the Bull Run watershed through rural land protection to minimize impervious surface.

Unfortunately, neither VDOT nor the National Park Service has adequately analyzed the impact of the proposed Bi-County Parkway in accelerating and increasing the level of development in the watershed.

- **Air Quality and Climate Impact:** According to VDOT's own analysis, the Bi-County Parkway would increase vehicle miles traveled and traffic congestion within the study area compared to not building the highway at all. Therefore the project would undermine the progress the Northern Virginia region has made over the past decade in reversing the trend of ever increasing trips per capita and length of trips. Whether we use traditional internal combustion vehicles, hybrids or electric cars, increased driving adds to traffic and increases net energy consumption and associated greenhouse gas emissions.

At a more local level, the highway would pass close to two newly constructed schools, subjecting the students to air and noise pollution, and foreclosing the opportunity for the children to walk and bicycle to school. Recent EPA studies have shown that children experience significant harm from the hot-spot air pollution generated by nearby highways.

- **Degradation of Historically Significant Land** -- The highway would take 68 acres of historic battlefield land -- the site of the Second Battle of Manassas, and lead to development of hundreds of acres throughout the western portion of the historic district. The traffic, noise and visual impact would forever degrade this historic landscape and discourage historic tourism.
- **Misspent Funds, Better Projects Lose Out** -- VDOT recently estimated that the Bi-County Parkway would cost \$444 million (or an astonishing \$44 million per mile), and the combined North-South Corridor would cost between \$1 billion and \$1.5 billion. This is simply an unacceptable amount of scarce funding to divert from critical needs, such as fixing I-66.

Regarding congestion around Dulles Airport, the proposed Bi-County Parkway -- which travels a few miles west of Dulles Airport and far from the passenger entrance on the east side -- would do little to address it. In fact, when outside transportation experts analyzed the current proposal, they found the highway would actually increase overall congestion in the study area. Further,

- VDOT's traffic numbers show the Bi-County Parkway would barely reduce traffic on Route 28, the key north-south artery to the airport passenger entrance.

- By generating residential development in rural areas west of the airport, it would increase traffic on major east-west commuting routes like Route 50.
- **Alternatives Exist** -- Several of our organizations have worked together to highlight an effective set of solutions for traffic in the highway study area and for access to Dulles Airport. These include:
  - Fixing and expanding the Route 28/I-66 interchange. The project currently is only partially funded.
  - Replacing the traffic light on Route 28 at Braddock Road with an interchange. This is the last Route 28 intersection requiring this conversion, but the project isn't currently funded.
  - Fixing Route 50 and Route 7, using interchanges where needed and providing nearby parallel roads for local traffic (e.g. Tall Cedars Parkway parallel to Route 50 and Riverside Parkway parallel to Route 7). Providing nearby parallel roads to Route 28 in Fairfax and Loudoun (e.g. Pacific Boulevard).
  - Expanding the two lane section of Route 606 to four lanes. This was recently funded.
  - Finishing rail to Dulles (the Silver Line). The state is not contributing adequate funds, placing most of the burden on toll payers and landowners for Phase 2.

Unfortunately, the alternatives that have been presented are being ignored in favor of a project that does not stand up to scrutiny. This focus on ineffective mega-projects has become the calling card of the McDonnell Administration; other notable examples include the proposals for the Charlottesville Western Bypass, the new Route 460 toll road, and the Coalfields Expressway.

We ask you to shift course and re-prioritize how our limited transportation dollars are spent, and reject the Bi-County Parkway and North-South Corridor in favor of much more critical transportation needs in Northern Virginia. We stand united in urging you to stop this project and instead work for the kinds of effective and sustainable transportation solutions of which all Virginians can be proud.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

**Stewart Schwartz**  
Executive Director  
The Coalition for Smarter Growth

**Hilary Falk**  
Director  
National Wildlife Federation Mid-Atlantic Region Center

**Christopher Miller**  
President  
The Piedmont Environmental Council

**Trip Pollard**  
Senior Attorney  
Southern Environmental Law Center

**Roger Diedrich**  
Transportation Chair  
Virginia Chapter of the Sierra Club

**Jacob Powell**  
Policy Manager  
Virginia Conservation Network

**Jeff Painter**  
Executive Director  
Virginia League of Conservation Voters

**Natalie Pien**  
Chair  
350 Loudoun

**John Hutchison**  
President  
Aldie Heritage Association

**Dan Smith**  
Public Policy Director  
Anacostia Watershed Society

**Bonnie Bick**  
President  
Chapman Forest Foundation

**Lori K. McGuinness and Bonnie Mattingly**  
Co-Chairs  
Goose Creek Association

**Nicole Hamilton**  
President  
Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy

**Jim Long**  
President  
Mattawoman Watershed Society

**Paulette Hammond**  
President  
Maryland Conservation Council

**Melinda Hughes-Wert**  
President  
Nature Abounds

**Hedrick Belin**  
President  
Potomac Conservancy

**Kim Hosen**

Executive Director  
Prince William Conservation Alliance

**Kate Wofford**

Executive Director  
Shenandoah Valley Network

cc:

Paul Reagan  
Chief of Staff

Suzette Denslow  
Deputy Chief of Staff

Jennifer McClellan  
Transition Chair