



May 8, 2019

Hon. Shannon Valentine  
Secretary of Transportation  
1111 E Broad Street  
Richmond, VA 23219

Dear Secretary Valentine,

The Arlington Chamber of Commerce supports the application of the Arlington County Board to rename US 1 as “Richmond Highway” within the boundaries of Arlington. We believe that the best course of action for Arlington’s businesses is to rename the road to the same name that is used across our border in the City of Alexandria and Fairfax County. Having the change take effect on October 1 will give all affected businesses, particularly smaller businesses, the opportunity to prepare for the change.

The Chamber has consulted with all of our member businesses which have a “Jefferson Davis Highway” address, who shared a range of opinions, the preponderance of which favored the County Board’s application. Uniformly, our members along US 1 wished for a speedy resolution on a permanent name for the road to remove the uncertainty from their businesses.

“Richmond Highway” is the name that US 1 carries immediately across our border in the City of Alexandria, and the road continues with that name through Fairfax County. Adopting the same name in Arlington would provide travelers with navigational consistency. Online navigation tools, e.g., Google Maps, have already adopted the “Richmond Highway” name in Arlington. The inconsistency between the road’s legal name and its name in such tools is creating logistical problems for businesses, including customers being unable to find their locations. At least one member has proactively changed the address on its website to “Richmond Highway” to match these tools.

The Chamber has also heard from members on US 1 that they have lost business because of the association with “Jefferson Davis Highway.” As an example, one hotelier described a group electing not to stay with them because of their address. Also, one real estate company told of a potential customer going elsewhere so as not to be located on “Jefferson Davis Highway.”

We anticipate considerable development over the next decade in the area through which US 1 passes. The Commonwealth has committed to supporting infrastructure improvements to the road itself that will result in a more unified neighborhood surrounding it. Changing the name of US 1 now would allow these developments to occur with a new and consistent street name.

For all these reasons, after careful study the Chamber encourages the Commonwealth Transportation Board to approve the Arlington County Board’s request to rename US 1 within Arlington County as “Richmond Highway,” effective October 1, 2019. Thank you for your consideration of these comments.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Kate Bates' in a cursive script.

Kate Bates  
President & CEO

CC: Commonwealth Transportation Board Members: Stephen C. Brich, Jennifer Mitchell, Jerry L. Stinson, Mary H. Hynes, Alison DeTuncq, Bert Dodson, Jr., W. Sheppard Miller, III, Carlos M. Brown, Stephen A. Johnson, F. Dixon Whitworth, Jr., E. Scott Kasprowicz, Raymond D. Smoot, Jr., Marty Williams, John Malbon, and Greg Yates; Assistant Secretary to the Commonwealth Transportation Board Carol Mathis; Arlington County Board Chair Christian Dorsey, Vice Chair Libby Garvey, and Members Katie Cristol, Matt de Ferranti, and Erik Gutshall; Arlington County Manager Mark Schwartz; Arlington County Department of Environmental Services Director Greg Emanuel, and Deputy Director of Transportation Dennis Leach