

March 5, 2024

To: The Honorable L. Louise Lucas, Chairwoman, Senate Committee on Finance and Appropriations
The Honorable Luke E. Torian, Chairman, House Committee on Appropriations

From: Virginia Business Leaders and Organizations

CC: The Honorable Mamie E. Locke
The Honorable R. Creigh Deeds
The Honorable Jennifer B. Boysko
The Honorable Ryan T. McDougle
The Honorable Todd E. Pillion
The Honorable Mark D. Sickles
The Honorable David L. Bulova
The Honorable Betsy B. Carr
The Honorable Terry L. Austin
The Honorable Robert S. Bloxom, Jr.

Re: Inclusion of the Virginia Sports and Entertainment Authority in State Budget

Dear Chairwoman Lucas, Chairman Torian, and Budget Conferees:

The Commonwealth of Virginia has a monumental opportunity to create jobs, generate revenue, and deliver benefits to the entire Commonwealth through the creation of a new sports and entertainment district in the Potomac Yard area of Alexandria. **As business and civic leaders from Northern Virginia and around the Commonwealth, we reaffirm our support for this once-in-a-lifetime project and urge you to support this monumental opportunity.**

The proposed sports and entertainment district will be unlike any project in Virginia, and unique among sports-anchored projects in the country. The proposal requires no up-front cash contributions by Virginia taxpayers, creates no new taxes, and pays for the project using revenues generated on-site and contributed by the arena anchor tenant, Monumental Sports and Entertainment. It is a creative, responsible, fiscally-sound financing structure that protects taxpayers and the quality of life in the City of Alexandria while delivering significant benefits for the city, Northern Virginia, and the Commonwealth as a whole.

The projected benefits of the project, which have been found to be sound, fair projections by the respected George Mason University Center for Regional Analysis, include 30,000 new jobs and billions in both direct and indirect local and state tax revenue.

This once-in-a-generation economic development opportunity is about so much more than an arena. To focus simply on the arena is to miss the millions of square feet of development and hundreds of millions of dollars in private investment that the district will catalyze, including significant new market rate and affordable housing stock, as well as transportation investments that will pay dividends for commuters and residents independent of any activities within the district.

The Commonwealth of Virginia may never again see such a unique opportunity to create jobs, strengthen our economy, diversify the city tax base and regional economy, and welcome two professional sports franchises here to Virginia.

On behalf of the hundreds of businesses collectively represented through the signatories of this letter, we urge you to seize this monumental opportunity for the Commonwealth and include the Virginia Sports and Entertainment Authority in your final budget agreement.

