



July 14, 2021

The Honorable Christian Dorsey
Arlington County Board
2100 Clarendon Boulevard, Suite 300
Arlington, Virginia 22201

Dear Mr. Dorsey,

The Arlington Chamber of Commerce supports the Maryland Traffic Relief Plan (TRP) to extend the 495 Express Lanes across a rebuilt American Legion Bridge. We encourage you to support the re-inclusion of this project in the Transportation Planning Board's (TPB) long-range plan.

Traffic volumes on the American Legion Bridge increased by 18 percent between 2002 and 2017, and population and employment growth are projected to continue in our region. Through 2045, the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments estimates that trips produced from Maryland to activity centers in Virginia are anticipated to increase further by 38%, and trips originating in Virginia and ending in Maryland are anticipated to increase by 21%. Improving the American Legion Bridge and Capital Beltway will help commuters get from homes in Maryland to jobs in Northern Virginia, including in Arlington, and vice versa.

Significant improvements to existing roadway infrastructure and transit systems are essential to accommodate these traffic patterns and growth. The Maryland TRP will dedicate \$300 million towards transit improvements, as will the 495 NEXT project. No bus line currently runs across the American Legion Bridge, and this \$600 million transit investment will help to relieve existing congestion, improve transit options, and mitigate future congestion as the region's economy grows.

The Maryland TRP also stands to have equity and environmental benefits for our region. As roadways carry nearly 80% of total trips in our region, including those on buses, increasing connectivity expands access to jobs and other opportunities for National Capital Region residents, not just those who live near economic centers. The TRP must also conform with environmental guidelines, and is expected to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by reducing congestion and incentivizing HOV and transit travel.

We thank you for your consideration of these comments.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kate Bates". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Kate Bates
President & CEO