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J. Randy Forbes
United States Congress

4th District, Virginia
September 10, 2012

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Mr. Victor M. Mendez
Federal Highway Administrator
Office of the Federal Highway Administration
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Mr. Mendez,

On July 24, 2012, I wrote to you expressing my strong opposition to the Virginia Department of Transportation's (VDOT) plan to implement a toll on Interstate Route 95 (I-95) in Southside Virginia. Following VDOT's submission of its final application on August 24, 2012, my position remains unchanged as I write to you once again, requesting that the Federal Highway Administration deny VDOT's application to move forward with the Interstate 95 Corridor Improvement Program.

According to the published implementation guidance for section 1216 (b) of the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century, the selection criteria for candidates in the Interstate System Reconstruction and Rehabilitation Pilot Program (ISRPP) includes a requirement that "the State plan for implementing tolls on the facility takes into account the interests of local, regional and interstate travelers." In VDOT's final submitted application, it has been made clear that the interests and concerns of Southside Virginians have not been adequately addressed.

VDOT's submitted application acknowledges that the communities most directly impacted by the placement of the proposed toll facility between I-95 Exits 20 and 24 are economically challenged. The application also states unambiguously that access to I-95 is "critical to the economic vitality of communities". With these acknowledgments it has been made clear that VDOT plans to impose a costly new toll that will restrict access and dilute the economic benefit that I-95 provides to the citizens of Southside Virginia whom are ill-equipped to shoulder these burdens.

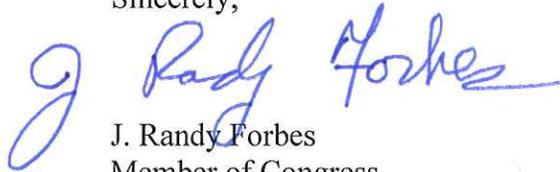
In my previous letter I shared my belief that it is unacceptable to ask these communities to take on a higher share of the cost for maintaining highways used by all Virginians. VDOT's application reaffirms that this is their plan. By moving forward with this tolling proposal VDOT has made the decision to place the costs of addressing the needs of Virginia's 179 mile I-95 Corridor disproportionately onto these specific communities.

VDOT's application also identifies "Priority" projects to receive toll revenues. Some of these projects are over 100 miles north of the proposed toll facilities. While the citizens of Southside Virginia will see their businesses suffer, their travel expenses increase, and their local roads made less safe by drivers attempting to avoid tolling, the benefits touted by VDOT will be enjoyed elsewhere.

I enclosed with my previous letter the resolutions of opposition passed by three localities that will be impacted by VDOT's proposal. To date, the list of Virginia's communities in opposition to this tolling proposal has grown to 17. In addition to the City of Emporia, Greensville County and Sussex County, the Town of Ashland, the City of Colonial Heights, Dinwiddie County, Hanover County, the City of Hopewell, the Town of Jarratt, the Town of Lawrenceville, the City of Petersburg, Prince George County, Sussex County, Spotsylvania County, Town of Stony Creek, Town of Wakefield, and the Town Waverly have all expressed opposition to VDOT's proposal.

I continue to stand with these localities in their opposition to this proposal that could prove economically devastating to their vulnerable communities in Southside Virginia. Once again, I urge you to deny VDOT's application to toll I-95 under the Interstate System Reconstruction and Rehabilitation Pilot Program.

Sincerely,



J. Randy Forbes
Member of Congress