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July 24, 2012

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

Dear Mr. Mendez,

In 2010, I wrote to you to express my concerns with the Virginia Department of Transportation's (VDOT) pursuit of tolling stations along Interstate Route 95 (I-95) in Southside Virginia (previous letter enclosed). My position remains unchanged as I write to you once again to express my strong opposition to VDOT's Interstate 95 Corridor Improvement Program.

It is my understanding that VDOT is preparing to file its final application with the Federal Highway Administration in order to move forward with the installation of tolling stations along I-95. While VDOT continues to tout the benefits of its tolling proposal, as a means of meeting demands for additional highway funding, I remain deeply concerned that tolling stations being placed in Southside Virginia will disproportionately burden the citizens of a region unable to shoulder additional economic challenges.

Many of these communities surrounding the proposed placement of the toll facility are already identified by the Commonwealth of Virginia as "economically stressed." Adding costly new tolls will exacerbate this situation by discouraging economic growth, increasing costs for area businesses, and making everyday travel more expensive for families. Under initial estimates, VDOT's proposal will mean a new cost of \$4 for cars and \$12 for large trucks each time that a vehicle passes through a gantry. This translates into a new cost of \$8 for a family driving from Emporia to Richmond each time they make the trip. I believe it is unacceptable to ask these economically challenged communities to take on an unfair and higher share of the cost of maintaining highways used by all Virginians.


To date, the local governments of the City of Emporia, Greensville County, and Sussex County have each adopted resolutions of opposition to VDOT's Corridor Improvement Program for I-95. Indicative of the impact these localities fear, the City of Emporia's resolution states clearly that "Emporia's population consists of many low to moderate income families who frequently travel I-95 for work and medical related reasons. The payment of tolls would be an undue financial

burden on the low to moderate income families living in the area.” Copies of each resolution of opposition have been included for your reference and consideration.

It is my hope that when considering VDOT’s proposal, you will bear in mind the potentially devastating economic impact to the vulnerable communities of Southside Virginia that new polling stations and costly new tolls on I-95 would have. Accordingly, I urge you to deny VDOT’s request to implement the current I-95 Corridor Improvement Program.

Thank you in advance for your consideration. With kind regards, I am

Yours Truly,



J. Randy Forbes
MEMBER OF CONGRESS