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“The Next Battle of Manassas: VDOT and the National Park Service Declare War on I-66 Commuters”

***DELEGATE TIM HUGO HOLDS PRESS CONFERENCE OPPOSING
THE NORTH-SOUTH CORRIDOR***

Gainesville, VA – Today, April 29, 2013, Delegate Tim Hugo (R-40th), along with Senators Dick Black (R-13th), Richard Stuart (R-28th), Jill Vogel (R-27th), and Delegates Bob Marshall (R-13th) and Michael Webert (R-18th), held a press conference at the Manassas Battlefield’s Stone House speaking in opposition to the North-South Corridor.

The North/South Corridor of statewide significance was approved in May 2011 by the Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB.) The CTB is a 17 member board that allocates Virginia’s funding for all transportation projects. Because of the Corridor’s proximity to the Manassas Battlefield Park, VDOT has been in numerous discussions with the National Park Service (NPS) regarding this road.

Delegate Hugo made the following statement at today’s press conference,

“I am opposed to the North/South corridor as I believe it is an ill-conceived transportation project. In a move to provide a cut through for cargo traffic to Dulles Airport, the CTB and VDOT are promoting a new billion dollar road that will devastate the commute of those on the I-66 corridor.

Inexplicably, missing from the CTB explanations of this project is the proposal to also close Rt. 29 & Rt. 234. Especially egregious is VDOT’s proposal to close Rt. 29 and divert all of this traffic to I-66 which will exacerbate congestion on the I-66 corridor...from Fauquier to Fairfax.

Additionally, this road will destroy the Rural Crescent, land that the Prince William Board of County Supervisors has pledged to protect; will take property away from over 100 landowners just in the Gainesville District; and will siphon monies away from critical transportation needs such as I-66.

I call on the Prince William, Fairfax and Fauquier County Board of Supervisors to work with us to fast track improvements to I-66 and Rt. 28. And I pledge to Prince William County to work with all stakeholders to bring real jobs to the County, not just a “cut-through” road to Dulles Airport.

*If the North/South Corridor is built, resulting in the closure of Rt. 29, commuters in Fairfax, Prince William and Fauquier Counties will be sitting on I-66, missing their children’s events, missing dinners, and watching their quality of life deteriorate. **VDOT, CTB, and the NPS are declaring war on the commuters of I-66. This is the New Battle of Manassas.**”*

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NORTH/SOUTH CORRIDOR

- VDOT/CTB has established a North/South Corridor of statewide significance and has entered into negotiations with the National Park Service. The closure of two major commuter roads, Rt. 234 and Rt. 29, will have a negative effect on the Rural Crescent and commuters on the I-66 corridor.
- VDOT/CTB have evolving reasons as to why it wants the North/South Corridor. From a major trucking/cargo route for the Port of Virginia to Dulles Airport, to a road that will bring economic development to Prince William County, to a way to get airline passengers to the airport quicker (the latest reasoning offered by VDOT/CTB).
- The most egregious component of this proposed project is the **closure of Rt. 29** through the Manassas National Battlefield Park (MNBFP).
- Current, VDOT plans for additional I-66 capacity only took into account normal growth of traffic in Northern Virginia. No studies have been undertaken as to what happens to I-66 with the closure of major roads inside the Manassas Battlefield.
- VDOT, in its Tier One Environmental Impact Studies (EIS), has already quantified that most of I-66 (from I-495 to Rt. 15) is rated at a failing grade in terms of congestion. Even during off peak hours, e.g., weekends, I-66 is at a standstill due to traffic congestion. Why aren't VDOT and the CTB putting all of its resources into relieving the most significant congestion problem that transverses east/west?
- Currently, local roads already become jammed when I-66 is backed up, but there are alternatives. VDOT/CTB and the NPS will remove those potential relief valves away from the commuters with this project.
- Traffic in western Fairfax will grow to unmanageable levels as commuters travelling west seek side roads to shave minutes off their commutes.
- Commuters will be stuck for hours in traffic that will back up all the way into Arlington. Commuters seeking to travel through Prince William into other counties, e.g., Fauquier, will see longer commutes.
- VDOT/CTB are spending hundreds of millions of dollars on this road project, which will do nothing to better the quality of life for Northern Virginians...these monies need to be spent on improvements to I-66 and Rt. 28. Those road improvements need to be fast-tracked, as they would have immediate congestion mitigation results.

Summary-VDOT/CTB/NPS is seeking to close 2 major roads with NO ALTERNATIVE but for commuters to jump onto an already failing road, I-66. If this project moves forward, the quality of life for ALL those who rely on I-66 will be diminished.