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February 5, 2018

Ms. Bridget Donnell Newton
Chairman
National Capital Region Transportation
Planning Board
777 North Capitol Street NE, Suite 300
Washington DC 20002



Dear Ms. Newton:

Thank you for your letter regarding the Maryland Transportation Authority's (MDTA) new Gov. Harry W. Nice Memorial (Nice) Bridge project. As Maryland Department of Transportation Secretary and MDTA Chairman, I am pleased to respond.

We would be pleased to meet with you to discuss your concerns about the new Nice Bridge height, emergency breakdown shoulders, and bicycle/pedestrian accommodations. Please contact MDTA Director of Project Development William Pines at 410-456-8045 to schedule a meeting.

Thank you again for your letter. If you have additional questions or concerns, please contact Mr. Pines at the number above or via email at wpines@mdta.maryland.gov. Mr. Pines will be happy to assist you.

Sincerely,

Pete K. Rahn
Chairman

cc: William Pines, P.E., Director of Project Development, Office
of Engineering and Construction, MDTA
Mr. Kevin C. Reigrut, Executive Director, MDTA



November 8, 2017

Secretary Pete K. Rahn
Maryland Department of Transportation Secretary and
Maryland Transportation Authority Chairman
Maryland Department of Transportation
7201 Corporate Center Boulevard
Hanover, MD 21076

Re: Governor Harry W. Nice Bridge Replacement Project

Dear Secretary Rahn:

The National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board (TPB) at the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (COG) recently took action to amend the National Capital Region's Constrained Long-Range Transportation Plan (CLRP) to accommodate Maryland's schedule acceleration of the Governor Harry W. Nice Bridge Replacement Project. Several questions and concerns were raised by TPB members regarding project development details. On behalf of the TPB, I am asking that a senior knowledgeable Maryland Transportation Authority representative meet and engage in a dialogue with the TPB in the near future regarding aspects of the bridge replacement that are of concern to TPB member governments in Maryland, Virginia, and the District of Columbia.

The TPB appreciates and supports the State of Maryland's efforts to accelerate and accomplish the replacement and upgrade of this vital link in the Maryland, Virginia and National Capital Region transportation infrastructure, as evidenced both by the TPB's previous inclusion of the project in the CLRP, as well as our October 18, 2017 actions to include this project with the updated schedule in the latest air quality conformity determination and CLRP amendment. Before taking the actions at the TPB's October 18 meeting, however, a number of TPB members raised questions and concerns and provided comments for the record. These concerns were, in summary:

1. *Bridge Height:* District of Columbia and City of Alexandria representatives expressed concerns about the impact of the proposed bridge height reduction on movement of historic tall ships and other tall vessels that currently access Washington and Alexandria ports. Inability for such vessels to reach Washington and Alexandria, among other destinations, will have negative community and economic impacts.
2. *Emergency Breakdown Shoulders:* The Charles County representative raised issues also noted in an (attached) October 6, 2017 letter to you from the Board of Charles County Commissioners. This letter was forwarded to TPB and is included in our official comment records as part of the conformity determination and plan approval. Charles County is concerned that a new bridge without adequate shoulder widths for emergency breakdowns "will not help relieve the congestion that is currently being seen on this bridge."
3. *Bicycle and Pedestrian Accommodations:* Also raised at the TPB and in the Charles County Commissioners' letter was the inclusion of bicycle and pedestrian connections on the replacement bridge. With a planned 100-year lifespan of a replacement bridge, this represents a once-in-100-years opportunity to provide such a bicycle and pedestrian connection, with important community and economic benefits. Including a bicycle and

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pedestrian connection would also be consistent with the TPB's adopted Complete Streets policy. Additionally, the Charles County Commissioners' letter asked for consideration of keeping and repurposing the existing Harry Nice Bridge as a bicycle and pedestrian facility.

The TPB would appreciate the chance for expert briefings and dialogue as the project design proceeds given these major concerns from jurisdictions around the region. We appreciate the ongoing participation in the TPB by Maryland Department of Transportation representatives of the Office of the Secretary. However, it will be vital in this case also to have senior representation from the Maryland Transportation Authority (MDTA) for these discussions, given the role that the MDTA and its board have in this project.

The TPB is currently engaged in the update of our long-range transportation plan for the National Capital Region, known as Visualize 2045. We look forward to providing our members with this opportunity for such a dialogue which will enable support for a timely and cost-effective replacement of the Nice Bridge that best enhances the National Capital Region's community needs and development for 2045 and beyond. We appreciate your leadership and assistance on these important considerations.

Sincerely,



Bridget Donnell Newton
TPB Chairman

Attachment

cc: Mr. R. Earl Lewis, Deputy Secretary, Maryland Department of Transportation
Mr. Kevin C. Reigut, Executive Director, Maryland Transportation Authority