

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

June 6, 2013

The Honorable Vincent C. Gray  
Mayor, District of Columbia  
1350 Pennsylvania Avenue NW  
Suite 316  
Washington, DC 20004

The Honorable Phil Mendelson  
Chairman, Council of the District of Columbia  
1350 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Suite 504  
Washington, D.C. 20004

Dear Mayor Gray and Chairman Mendelson,

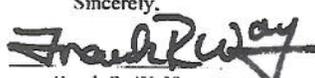
We write to express our profound objection to the new tax on commuter buses that was recently adopted by the Council of the District of Columbia as part of its FY14 budget.

Levying a \$5 per bus per day fee against suburban Virginia and Maryland commuter bus operators serving the District is a commuter tax and undermines the regional success we have fought so hard to achieve in attaining one of the highest rates of mass transit ridership in the nation. Every day, thousands of residents from across the region, many of whom work for the Federal Government, ride one of the many commuter buses to and from their work destination or to connect with another form of mass transit to reach their destinations. The region's commuter bus operators provide a benefit to the District by reducing the number of cars and congestion in D.C. each day, easing wear and tear on D.C. roads, and lowering auto pollution. This new tax likely will be passed on to riders, prompting many to return to commuting by car.

In addition, we are concerned about the detrimental effect this new tax could have on the region's long-standing tradition for partnership and collaboration. At no time were the local and state governments, which either operate or subsidize the commuter bus services, informed or invited to comment about this proposal. In fact, they still have not been notified after the fact. As current and former leaders of the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments and its Transportation Planning Board, you both understand the value of the regional relationships and the value added for the District from our local and state partners making these critical mass transit investments. We respectfully request you and the Council reconsider this ill-advised proposal prior to the final adoption of the FY14 budget June 18, 2013.

Sincerely,

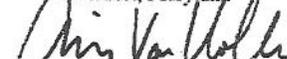
  
Gerald E. Connolly  
11<sup>th</sup> District, Virginia

  
Frank R. Wolf  
10<sup>th</sup> District, Virginia

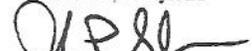
  
Steny H. Hoyer  
5<sup>th</sup> District, Maryland

  
James P. Moran  
8<sup>th</sup> District, Virginia

  
Elijah E. Cummings  
7<sup>th</sup> District, Maryland

  
Chris Van Hollen  
8<sup>th</sup> District, Maryland

  
Donna F. Edwards  
4<sup>th</sup> District, Maryland

  
John P. Sarbanes  
3<sup>rd</sup> District, Maryland

  
Robert Wittman  
1<sup>st</sup> District, Virginia

  
John K. Delaney  
6<sup>th</sup> District, Maryland

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