

**Statement of Robert O. Chase
To the National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board
September 16, 2009**

I have three menu items to discuss.

The first is the National Gateway Project which the Alliance endorses as a “smart” way to take trucks off our highways and increase highway capacity while lowering maintenance costs, fuel consumption and greenhouse gases.

The second is your agenda Item 7 dealing with American Recovery and Reinvestment Act funds. The Alliance commends to you the Fairfax County Parkway/Monument Drive Interchange, the Wellington Road Improvements and the Prince William Parkway widening, while continuing to express concern regarding use of federal economic recovery funds for local trails, sidewalks, curbs and gutters, restroom rehabilitation and bicycle programs, which are more appropriately a local responsibility. Applying federal stimulus funds in such a manner, regardless of the amount, sets a poor precedent and makes it more difficult to convince legislators and area taxpayers that new, reliable regional and statewide transportation funds are a necessity.

The third is regional security. Eight years have passed since the 9-11 tragedy. Iran and North Korea move closer to major nuclear weapon capabilities and terrorist organizations intensify efforts to secure such weaponry or technology. Yet here in the Capital of the free world and everything extremist organizations love to hate, our emergency response and evacuation focus continues to be largely limited to communications coordination, information exchange, video monitors and traffic sensors.

No doubt those trying to escape harms way will appreciate they are being accurately counted and monitored. However, while the fact that “shelter in place” is the official emergency response policy of this area garners nervous laughs from citizen and business groups I address, these folks are unlikely to be laughing when a far more serious 9-11 type tragedy hits this area and nothing of a serious nature has been done to expand and upgrade evacuation routes.

It seems the more serious traffic congestion becomes in this region, the more our regional bodies hunker down on projects and investments of lesser significance.

It’s time to end the nine years of testing unachievable Regional Mobility and Accessibility scenarios and focus on serious transportation improvements to better connect, move and improve the safety, security and well-being of area residents.

It’s time to end applications for millions of federal dollars for minor matters and apply for billions of federal dollars to move more national capital region residents out of harms way.



August 25, 2009

The Honorable Mark Warner
United States Senate
459A Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Warner:

Founded in 1987, the Northern Virginia Transportation Alliance is focused on working to make better transportation a reality for Northern Virginia citizens and businesses. Our sole mission is to advance transportation improvements in Northern Virginia. We support a balanced transportation network and strategies that move the most people and goods most effectively.

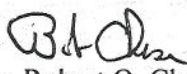
We believe that the National Gateway project will be an important initiative in reducing congestion and creating additional network capacity in the metropolitan Washington area, and encourage you to support federal funding for this private-public project. When complete, the National Gateway will provide additional capacity, facilities and equipment for highly efficient freight service.

Expanding capacity on our nation's railways will create additional highway capacity, improve the environment and promote economic growth. By creating a 21st century rail corridor between Virginia's international ports and the Midwest's manufacturing centers, the National Gateway will reduce highway congestion by shifting millions of trucks off Virginia's highways, including I-95 and I-66. As a result of this truck diversion, Virginia will save tens of millions in highway maintenance costs, funds that may be reallocated for high priority transportation improvements. As you know, hundreds of millions of state and federal construction dollars are currently diverted annually to maintenance due to the Virginia General Assembly's persistent inability to adequately fund transportation.

Additionally, the National Gateway will reduce fuel consumption by millions of gallons and CO₂ emissions by hundreds of thousands of tons, meeting the Alliance's priority goal on improving air quality in a practical, cost-effective manner.

For these reasons, we believe that the National Gateway can be a meaningful component of Northern Virginia's and the Commonwealth's congestion reduction strategy and urge you to support federal funding for this important infrastructure development initiative.

Sincerely,


Robert O. Chase
President

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