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Tim McLaughlin  
FAMPO Chairman

Paul Agnello  
FAMPO Administrator

September 17, 2018

To: GWRC Region State Delegation

**Re: Preserving the right to widen I-95 in Stafford County between Exit 143 and Exit 133**

With a daily average of up to 150,000 vehicles, Interstate 95 in Stafford County was identified in the 2017 INRIX Traffic Study as having the worst congestion of any road in the nation.

Four to six years from now the planned 95 Express Lanes extension from Exit 143 to Exit 133 and the Rappahannock River Crossing projects will provide some much-needed additional capacity to help relieve that congestion, and the Region appreciates the Commonwealth's efforts to improve I-95 traffic mobility and safety.

We are concerned, however, with the ability of the planned improvements to handle peak weekend traffic in the future. Existing peak weekend traffic often rivals peak weekday traffic; some of the Region's worst congestion occurs on Friday, Saturday and Sunday.

The planned 95 Express Lanes extension will provide two additional reversible lanes, enabling the Commonwealth to provide five lanes for the peak direction and three lanes in the opposing direction. This lane configuration works well for peak weekday commuter traffic where the heavy traffic is one direction in the AM and in the opposite direction in the PM.

The problem in our Region with peak weekend traffic, however, is that the traffic can be at peak level in both directions at the same time. In this situation, a fourth general purpose lane is needed for both sides of I-95.

Widening I-95 from six to eight lanes between Exit 143 and Exit 133 would be an extremely cost-effective improvement. Most of this section has an existing hard shoulder on the median side of the road. This hard shoulder exists because it used to be a full-depth general purpose travel lane before the interstate was widened from four to six lanes in the mid-1980's. Converting a hard shoulder to a general-purpose lane is considerably less costly than building a brand-new lane. As a result, we strongly feel that the option of widening I-95 from six to eight lanes between Exit 143 (Route 610) and Exit 133 (U.S. 17) in Stafford County should be preserved for the future.

In conclusion, we are concerned to hear that there is a possibility that the right of the Commonwealth to widen I-95 from six to eight lanes in Stafford County may be significantly restricted by the planned agreement for the extension of the 95 Express Lanes to Exit 133. Our understanding is the restriction

could require that the Commonwealth provide competition compensation to the operator of the 95 Express Lanes if additional general-purpose lanes are provided in the future. This compensation could significantly increase the cost of widening I-95 in Stafford County and could reduce the ability of the Region and Commonwealth to work together to provide cost-effective solutions to improve traffic mobility and safety. We would appreciate your assistance on this issue.

Sincerely,

Tim McLaughlin  
Chairman

Cc: FAMPO Policy Committee