

December 18, 2017

Dear Sir/Madam:

I wish to state my opposition to the northern Potomac bridge crossing that is being proposed as part of the proposed "Outer Beltway". My reasons follow:

A major highway bridge increases the likelihood of a chemical spill that could contaminate our drinking water. In 1997, 1 out of 10 trucks in the U.S. was transporting hazardous material. About half of those carried flammable liquids, such as gasoline, diesel fuel, and fuel oil. Accidents are common, and a study of data from 1991 to 2000 found that the likelihood of a spill in the event of a crash was 50% higher for hazardous materials than non-hazardous.

- One tanker truck of hazardous material can contaminate an entire drinking water system. A chemical spill in the amount equivalent to one tanker left 300,000 Charleston WV residents without water for over 10 days in 2014.
- We could have less than a day to react before a spill contaminates municipal water intakes serving nearly 5 million area residents. Water intakes for Fairfax County, the City of Rockville, Montgomery and Prince George's Counties, and the District of Columbia are all downstream from the most likely crossing.
- A spill requiring cleanup lasting longer than 48 hours could result in most of the Washington Metro Area being without water. We currently have only 24 to 48 hours of water supply without the Potomac.
- Climate change could make backup water supplies less reliable during spill events. Droughts are predicted to be more frequent and longer, resulting in backup supplies being used more extensively and potentially running out.
- The construction of the necessary connecting roads to the proposed bridge could do irreparable harm to the Montgomery County Agricultural Reserve and lead to extensive development in the Reserve.

Sincerely,

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