

## Fairfax County Federation of Citizens Associations

### Resolution in Support of Virginia Avenue Tunnel and National Gateway Initiative

WHEREAS: In the middle of the century, as rail cars widened and got taller, the Virginia Avenue Tunnel was converted to a single track tunnel. Double track runs up to both ends of the tunnel, but then goes down to single track through it. Freight trains must then sit in Virginia and Maryland to make a window to be able to move through the tunnel. Because CSX a 24 hour operation, trains can not be reset like airlines do so if a train doesn't make the window then it sits and waits for the next one, causing other trains to wait behind it. This same CSX track is also used by VRE and Amtrak in Virginia and MARC in Maryland. Today, 80-90 trains (CSX, VRE, and Amtrak) cross over the Long Bridge to enter DC making this one of the busiest tracks on our 23-state system.

WHEREAS: The Virginia Avenue Tunnel in Washington, DC is listed on the Mid-Atlantic Rail Operations Planning Study in 2001 and 2009 as one of the biggest bottlenecks on the east coast that prevents the efficient movement of both passenger and freight rail (although no passenger rail moves through this tunnel).

WHEREAS: The Virginia Avenue Tunnel is also part of a corridor that was a finalist for funding in 2006's USDOT Corridors of the Future Program, which received \$98 million from the TIGER grant for 38 clearance projects in Ohio, Pennsylvania and West Virginia.

WHEREAS: The Virginia Avenue Tunnel is part of a \$842 million project which consists of 61 clearance projects and 6 intermodal terminals throughout six states and the District of Columbia and is an effort to improve an existing rail corridor to be able to more efficiently move intermodal freight by double-stacking.

WHEREAS: The initiative, of which the Virginia Avenue Tunnel is a part, provides over \$10 billion in public benefits - \$22 return for every \$1 of public funds invested.

WHEREAS: This multi-state public-private partnership, of which the Virginia Avenue Tunnel is a part, has gained the support of all six governors along the corridor, three port authorities, three metropolitan planning organizations, and around 150 elected officials, businesses, organizations and environmental groups. adversely impacts passenger rail service plans since VRE, Amtrak and MARC all have visions of doubling the amount of passengers/ trains they move into and through the District. Unfortunately, there are five rail issues that have to be addressed first. Those projects consist of: (1) the VRE triple tracking from Richmond to DC, (2) fixing/rebuilding the Long Bridge to add two more tracks (making this a quad track bridge), (3) the Maryland Avenue extension project (quad tracks this area through DC, decks over the railroad to bring back Maryland Avenue, and builds a new L'Enfant Station), (4) double-track and double-stack the Virginia Avenue Tunnel (adds more efficiency to the lines in VA, DC and MD and aids in preventing blockages from freight trains), and then finally (5) run through service for VRE and MARC at Union Station (adds capacity at Union Station and frees up Metro's red line).

WHEREAS: The Virginia Avenue Tunnel project has the opportunity for tremendous benefits for freight movement and enhancing the competitiveness of Virginia ports. Currently USDOT

predicts an 87% growth in freight movement in the US by 2035. The National Gateway Initiative, of which the Virginia Avenue Project is a part, looks to ease some of the freight congestion on numerous highways, including I-95 and I-81 in Virginia.

WHEREAS: The Virginia Avenue Tunnel project is a part of the National Gateway Initiative that offers states highway maintenance savings and shipper's significant logistical savings that can be passed along to their customers. There are also significant specific benefits to accrue to the state of Virginia and to Fairfax County's tourism industry.

WHEREAS: Fairfax County elected officials have votes on the Washington Metropolitan Area Council of Governments' Transportation Planning Board which must approve the Virginia Avenue Tunnel project, and

WHEREAS: Virginia US Senators and Congressional Representatives have an opportunity to influence funding for the Virginia Avenue Tunnel project.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Fairfax County Federation of Citizens' Associations hereby announce support the Virginia Avenue Tunnel project and the National Gateway Initiative and urge Virginia's elected officials at all levels to facilitate the implementation of this project immediately.

Approved by the Federation Membership on 20 May 2010