



**Statement of Robert O. Chase, Northern Virginia Transportation Alliance
To Commission of Government Reform and Restructuring Town Hall Meeting
July 8, 2010**

The Northern Virginia Transportation Alliance is a business-citizen coalition dedicated to advancing the best regional transportation solutions. The Alliance is focused exclusively on working to make better transportation a reality for Northern Virginia citizens and businesses.

Ensuring efficient operation and investment of taxpayers' dollars is an important government responsibility and the Alliance commends members of the Governor's Government Reform Commission for participating in this exercise.

In terms of transportation reform, the Alliance believes the single greatest need is the identification and prioritization (and ultimately finance and construction) of those transportation investments offering the greatest mobility and congestion-reduction benefits to the greatest number of people.

Currently the Commonwealth and its most congested region have long lists of transportation projects, but no short list of most important priorities. Absent sound prioritization too many dollars will be spent on projects offering too little benefit.

Earlier this year legislation to make such prioritization state policy was deferred by the General Assembly. It needs to be reconsidered. The Alliance also recommends that the Commission look at prioritization criteria currently being developed by the Hampton Roads Transportation Planning Organization as a possible statewide model.

With regards to recommendations submitted to this Commission to date, those the Alliance believes have particular merit include:

- Consolidation of the Northern Virginia Transportation Authority and Transportation Commission with the new entity composed of more regionally-appointed than locally-elected officials.
- Re-drawing and possible consolidation of Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB) districts. At-large appointments for modes such as rail, transit and ports should include at least one individual for the statewide highway network.

One recommendation to which the Alliance takes exception is that which in cases of major highway construction projects requires preference always be given to construction alternatives. Common sense and fiscal responsibility dictate that preference should always be given to the solution that most cost-effectively addresses the problem. Preference should never be awarded to lesser alternatives simply because they are alternatives.

In conclusion, the Alliance observes that audits and adjustments have merit, but absent significant new levels of dedicated, reliable transportation funds, the Commission's work will have little tangible benefit to citizens and businesses who need a reliable transportation network.

Whether you decide Virginia's transportation program should consist of rows of 10 or 8 or 6 deck chairs, make no mistake, like the Titanic, the Commonwealth's transportation program is sinking and the Commonwealth will sink unless new, reliable funding is provided to build and maintain the transportation network necessary to support the economy, jobs and quality of life Virginians need.

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