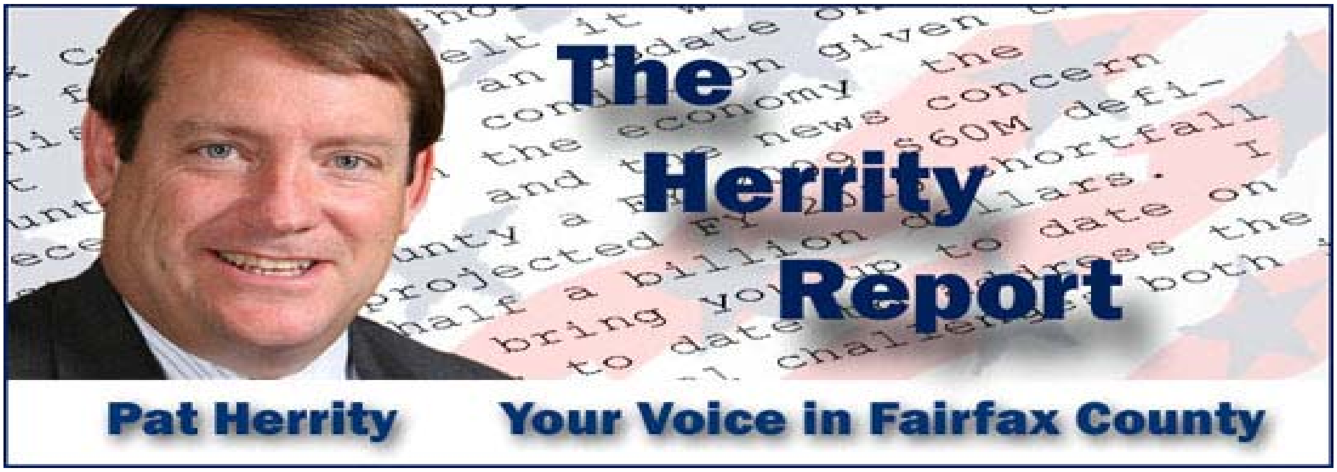


**July 27, 2011**

## Dulles Rail: Can the Corridor Sustain Tolls of $21.50 in 2020?

Would you pay $21.50 in tolls to get to and from work each day - $5,160 per year? That is the question employers and residents of Tysons Corner and the Dulles corridor are going to ask before locating there. Without exception, the businesses and residents I have talked with are answering with a resounding NO. What will this mean for the future of Tysons Corner and the Dulles corridor and the residents of Fairfax County? Nothing good.

The Dulles corridor and Tysons Corner are the economic engines of Fairfax County, Northern Virginia and the entire Commonwealth of Virginia. The Dulles Toll Road is a key component of that corridor. Residents throughout the state and region should be concerned with protecting the health of this corridor as it is critical to our future in everything from jobs to commercial tax base.

Early predictions are for at least a $1.2B overrun on Phase II of the Dulles Rail project. The primary source (75%), as well as the only uncapped source, of revenue for the project is the tolls on the Dulles Toll Road. Even with all of the cost shifting and cost savings currently being discussed under talks led by US Secretary of Transportation LaHood, tolls are still projected to exceed $20 per round trip by 2020.

For some time now I have been raising concern on the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors that the major toll increases will have an adverse impact on the corridor. I am aware of at least three companies that have already chosen to locate outside the corridor because of the tolls. Businesses must compete for employees and $20 a day is enough to make a difference when trying to attract employees – especially entry level employees.

The Metropolitan Washington Airport Authority's own toll road projections show a significant decrease in trips on the toll road as people flee the increased tolls. That means they are either leaving the corridor permanently or are driving on the already congested side roads.

Rail is typically a driver of economic activity and this promise of increased economic activity is a primary reason for the overwhelming support for rail in the corridor. But will the negative impact of these high tolls offset the gains from rail or worse yet have a detrimental impact on the corridor?

What is the range of tolls that will keep and attract businesses and residents in the corridor? That is the question I unsuccessfully tried to get the Board of Supervisors to study at our April meeting.

I raised these concerns again at our July 26 meeting but the Board majority continues to oppose any study of the impact of the tolls. They point to the fact that MWAA will be conducting a new toll study. The problem is that neither the last study nor the projected study will look at whether business and residents will continue to stay or move to the corridor.

The Board majority claims they are concerned about the tolls and that is why we are going through the cost shifting process. The truth is these discussions are only happening because the toll road could not bear the tolls required under the new cost projections. In other words the level of tolls were so high that the increased toll rates were driving more people away than the increased rates were providing in revenue, and the project was not fundable at that level.

Before we make major decisions regarding Phase II, we must understand and take into account the impact of the tolls on the future of Tysons Corner and the Dulles corridor. Blindly proceeding with the project without understanding the impact of the tolls would be irresponsible. I will continue to push for an analysis of the impact of the tolls.

**Motion to Amend Board Strategy to Include the Project Labor Agreement in MWAA Negotiations Ruled Out of Order on Party Line Vote**

At the July 26th Board of Supervisors meeting the Board was asked to approve a negotiating strategy on US Secretary of Transportation LaHood's proposal to shift costs on the Phase II of Dulles Rail. One major thing that I believed was missing in the Board's strategy to address the MWAA arguments on Phase II was MWAA's plans to invoke a union-favoring Project Labor Agreement (PLA). Phase I has a voluntary PLA that was written by the winning contractor and not mandated. MWAA is clearly going in a different direction with Phase II. They have formed a committee to draft the PLA – not leaving it to the general contractor as in Phase I.

The MWAA Board has proven themselves to be less than good partners and the Board is controlled by members from Maryland and D.C., and is at best dysfunctional. I do not trust them to do what is in the best interest of Virginia, this is why it must be addressed now. A mandated PLA would push jobs out of Virginia and as demonstrated clearly by the Woodrow Wilson Bridge project lead to increased costs. See Herrity Report: MWAA's $700m plus Highway Robbery.

I believed that this was the right time to push for a successful resolution to the PLA discrepancies. Governor McDonnell has made it clear this must be resolved before the Commonwealth contributes any additional funds. But my motion to have MWAA commit to not invoke a mandatory project labor agreement and repeat the success of the voluntary project labor agreement prepared by the winning contractor as in Phase I was ruled out of order on a party line vote.

As a result of the Board's continued refusal to look at the impact of the tolls on the Dulles corridor and Tysons Corner, and their decision to not address the cost increasing PLA in the negotiating strategy, I voted along with Supervisor Frey against the current negotiating strategy.