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June 23, 2021

Department of Transportation and Capital Infrastructure  
101 Blue Seal Drive, Suite 102  
Leesburg, VA 20177

SUBJECT: Route 15 North – Montresor Road to the Maryland State Line CPAM

To whom it may concern:

While we are generally skeptical of the proposed Route 15 North widening and Lucketts bypass actually improving the congestion along this corridor in the long-term, as the principal landowner to be impacted by the proposed southern section of the western bypass option, Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy strongly opposes this alignment. In addition to the potential western bypass proposal being located within the floodplain on the property, the area in question is also in progress of having additional wetlands created.

Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy has an executed agreement with The Nature Conservancy to construct wetlands by the end of 2022 in the exact location identified on the potential western bypass illustrative. While we recognize that the exact alignment will be determined at a later stage, the constructed mitigation wetlands will extend west of the existing creek beyond the edge of the existing floodplain and form a continuous chain of wetlands to the western border of the property along Newvalley Church Road.

Furthermore, Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy opposes any alignment of a western bypass option that traverses JK Black Oak Wildlife Sanctuary, as our property is now known as. Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy purchased this property in 2020 after initial public outreach was conducted on this proposed project. Our goal for the property is to forever preserve and enhance the globally rare wetlands at JK Black Oak Wildlife Sanctuary as a wildlife sanctuary by protecting the sensitive vernal pools, unique geologic setting, and the rich amphibian and wildlife populations. Additionally, to serve as a model and catalyst to conserve adjacent lands and to create an ecologically significant sanctuary for the conservation and study of native wildlife and flora there and to educate others in their value.

A conservation easement is held by the Land Trust of Virginia to preserve and protect the conservation values found at the property, and an additional overlay easement will include additional protections for the area including, and surrounding, the wetlands creation project. Virginia's Department of Conservation and Recreation's Natural Heritage program has studied the property and concluded it supports a globally rare wetland community.

This particular parcel holds tremendous innate value for wildlife, but it is also a special place for the Village of Lucketts. We look forward to continuing to engage the Lucketts community, and all Loudoun County residents, to experience the awe and wonder of the unique flora and fauna found at JK Black Oak Wildlife Sanctuary. For these reasons, we oppose any western bypass option. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,  
Michael Myers  
Executive Director

**PO Box 1892, Leesburg, VA 20177**