

Transcribed Public Comments from the September 15, 2016 HRTPO Board Meeting

*The views and opinions expressed during the public comment period
do not necessarily reflect the opinion or policy of the HRTPO.*

Three people requested to address the HRTPO Board at the September 15, 2016 Meeting. Chair Johnson asked them to limit their comments to three minutes.

Ms. Donna Sayegh Portsmouth Citizen

Good afternoon. My name is Donna Sayegh and I live in Portsmouth. As I look at the Hampton Roads Transportation Planning Organization Executive Director's report, I'm seeing that he is addressing both the HRPDC and the HRTPO board members, we've got a problem with enmeshment. We have big cluster of individuals who are defining themselves as members of a regional government, which is a federal government in nature. This federal government overreach started with the war of southern independence. This war produced the foundation for regionalism, consolidated and absolute, based on the unrestrained will of the majority. Lincoln was accused by Senator Douglas of wanting to impose on the nation's uniformity of local laws and institutions and morale homogeneity dictated by the central government. Not only did the war lay the foundation for eventual weakening of basic constitutional protection against central government abuses, but it also laid to rest the grave principle enunciated in the Declaration of Independence that governance or instituted among man deriving just powers for improvements the consent of the govern. Number six is an example of this centralized govern with the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation being in charge of the railroads and also the Hampton Roads transit. Then there's a transit commission that is not part of the Department of Rail and Public Transportation. Next, a local city is pushing on the citizens that have light rail. This regional body is elected and what they will enforce. We need to give back to our local governments to make decisions, not this body. Another issue I have, how come the port is not the one who is leading the transportation issue since the port is the reason all the roads, bridges and tunnels are being created. The HRT and the WATA commission needs to be in its own separate category, not with the Department of Rails. All of these issues are examples of enmeshment. The General Assembly caused it. Lastly, the study that is being done has been discussed three times now. We need to reorganize the HRPDC and the HRTPO because there's too much duplications of work. We need to cut out committees and give back to the localities their responsibilities. Thanks for listening.

Mr. John Gergely Newport News Citizen

Hello. Today I'd like to address the Peninsula mayors, the county chairs, the General Assembly members on the Peninsula, all except my mayor who has left. Where is your outreach over this push pull that they call VDOT calls crossing city, the environmental study. You all should know by now, everybody's told you there's only enough money. There will only be enough money for a one mega project, not a whole bunch of projects. Instead of this thing showing individual projects to choose from, it shows one project, and then it's just like one of the cheap TV ads. Wait, there's more. We'll add a little more, but what they're not telling you about is the extra shipping and handling costs, there is no money for more than one project, and as Mr. Crum just told you, if anything but Alternative A is picked, you'll go right back to prioritization and we

know what happened with prioritization. For those of you who have been around, Patriots Crossing's 80 percent money was fleeced into the 8 cent money that didn't exist was fleeced in the prioritization process to make it viable. That's the only reason Patriot's Crossing here, it was a crooked mess, if anything, but if Alternative A is chosen, it will be prioritization and that's what's going to happen. Meanwhile, all this -- Mr. Rucker, you ought to shut this down. They need to do an environmental study, not this push pull. All of this is going on, meanwhile Norfolk's lobby is going around talking about let's compromise on B or some of the others. If you have any doubt of where Norfolk stands, go to the city website. Norfolk is totally in the can for Patriots Crossing. Their study shows, their website shows they want to give the Peninsula less than one percent of the Hampton Roads transportation fund, less than one percent. Go to their website. You are getting shafted by the Southside Peninsula. If Patriots Crossing is ever started -- if Alternative B is picked, they'll start driving poles for that the dog lane that sort of half of Patriots Crossing. Once that gets started, you'll get talked into finishing it. You will never see Hampton Roads Bridge-Tunnel ever get built. Thank you very much.

Mr. Ellis James
Norfolk Citizen

Thank you, Madam Chair. My name is Ellis W. James. I reside at 2021 in the city of Norfolk. I just got a taste of how Mrs. Clinton felt the other day. I didn't know I could still stand for an hour and something. I'd like to defend the Southside, I'm getting a little bit weary of kinds of aspersions of the use of the word crooked being thrown around that impacts our side of the water. I want to urge the TPO commissioners to think seriously about supporting Alternative D. I think the discussion today was vigorous, thorough, and informative. I as a citizen knew much of it but I did not know all of it, and I am convinced that Alternative D is certainly going to address many of the concerns, especially the concerns of military representatives and our legislators who may or may not be back there now still. I think that this body deserves to hear from citizens who are for or against projects, but not constant rants against our government. This business of transportation and what we do about it in this region is serious business. Sometimes deadly serious business. And we need to address the issue seriously in my opinion and I really want to commend the TPO members for today making the kinds of input and raising questions that they're concerned about. I like D, I hope that the members will support D and keep in mind that our good friends in Virginia Beach are about in a couple of months to weigh in on light rail, is I'm hoping that they will support light rail. I have been a supporter throughout my years of coming here and the progress is very good, and I applaud one of the candidates in Virginia Beach for stepping forward and taking a strong position. Madam Chair, thank you very much.