



TOWN OF
Poolesville
MARYLAND

Phyllis J. Randall
Chair, At-Large
Loudoun County Board of Supervisors
P.O. Box 7000
Leesburg, VA 20177-7000

5/1/2024

Dear Chair Randall:

The Fair Access Committee and the Town of Poolesville write to express our view that the recent announcement by Whites Ferry owner Chuck Kuhn that he would donate the Ferry to Montgomery County may finally offer a means to resolve this long-standing impasse.

We recognize Mr. Kuhn made the donation proposal "contingent on Montgomery and Loudoun counties working together to find a solution to gain access to the Virginia shoreline and reopen the ferry in a timely manner." While Mr. Kuhn's contingency might seem constraining, we believe this announcement offers the potential of finding a permanent solution to the impasse. By removing himself from the process, Mr. Kuhn is simply acknowledging the reality that a long since failed process needs to be dramatically altered. He has, in effect, put the two counties involved in a position to work even more closely together, using any and all means they have available to get the boat running again.

In saying this, we acknowledge and thank Loudoun County for continuing to partner with Montgomery County over these many years to try and move the failed negotiations process forward. We know that some feel the Ferry is just a minor transportation issue and even believe that its operation is of most interest to Montgomery County. While it is true that Poolesville has been most profoundly affected by the Ferry's closure, we believe, as we noted in our testimony before your Council in November 2020, that in reality our two areas of Western Montgomery County and Northern Loudoun County have many similarities.

Both counties benefit tremendously from tourist traffic and hold many attractions based on their rural nature, including a wealth of historic and recreational sites, and many restaurant, brewery and winery venues. A recent study of the economic impacts of the

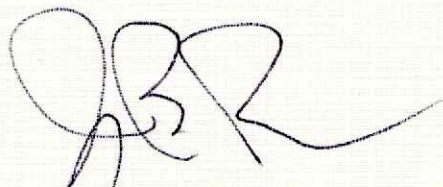
C&O Canal, for example, shows that visits to it alone generate hundreds of millions of dollars a year in business and tax revenues, benefiting jurisdictions on both sides of the Potomac River.

This and other evidence regarding rural tourism demonstrates the importance of the Ferry to our two jurisdictions. It may not carry traffic at high levels compared to other roadways nearby, but it is an important complement to area roadways and a natural fit with the rural wonders that exist all over our area. It is a "living history" example of what our areas were like along the Potomac for generations and a reminder of our joint history bordering the Potomac River with long standing ties of many kinds - economic, social and historical.

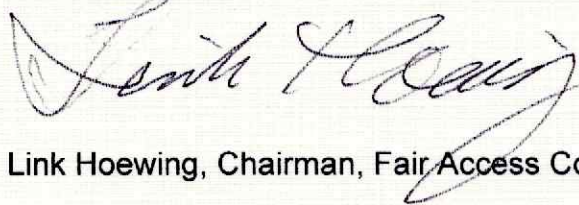
Beyond all of this, of course, the Ferry does carry commuter traffic between our jurisdictions, benefiting our combined high-tech sectors in particular. Its closure has also had a profound economic, environmental and social impact as you know. We estimate that as many as 10 million more miles may have been driven since the Ferry closed as people were forced to travel up and back to Point of Rocks bridge, adding even more traffic to Route 15.

In closing, we acknowledge the work that has been done between our two counties regarding the Ferry. We hope we can seize this potential opportunity and turn it into a new chapter of cooperation and success between our two counties.

Sincerely,



James E. Brown, President, Poolesville Town Commissioners



Link Hoewing, Chairman, Fair Access Committee