

Jack Jouett Bypass Advisory Committee

Dennis S. Rooker, Chairman
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Harold L. Jones, Jr., PE
Project Manager, Location & Design
VDOT Culpeper District
1601 Orange Road
Culpeper, VA 22701

RE: Route 29 Charlottesville Bypass

Dear Hal:

The Jack Jouett Bypass Advisory Committee requests that the Virginia Department of Transportation hold a public hearing rather than an informal citizen's informational meeting for the proposed Route 29 Bypass project in Albemarle County.

No new information about the Bypass has been developed and shared with our community in nearly a decade. Members of our community have many unanswered questions about the Bypass. Public input on new impacts and changed circumstances are crucial to mitigating the impacts of the project. The best way to receive that input is through a public hearing.

The proposed Bypass will be the largest transportation project in Albemarle County since the construction of I-64 approximately 40 years ago. It has enormous environmental and construction-related impacts due to its location in the heart of the urban ring of Albemarle County. During and after construction, it will negatively impact over 3,000 students at 7 schools (Albemarle High School, Jack Jouett Middle School, Greer Elementary School, Agnor Hurt Elementary School, the Ivy Creek School, St. Anne's-Belfield Lower and Middle Schools, and the Darden Business School at the University of Virginia). These schools will experience noise and air pollution problems associated with documented health risks in perpetuity because of the proximity of the Bypass to their facilities. The value of private property to be taken by the State as a result of this project would be the largest such taking in the history of Albemarle County.

Likewise, residents of eight established neighborhoods (Canterbury Hills, Colthurst, Montvue, Lambs Road, Roslyn Heights, Roslyn Ridge, Squirrel Ridge, and Woodlands Road) will experience these same noise and air pollution problems in perpetuity, as will residents of neighborhoods near the northern terminus of the Bypass, such as The Colonnades, a Sunrise Senior Retirement Community. This represents several thousand residents who will experience detrimental effects of this Bypass' construction. In addition, the Bypass will pass perilously close to the South Fork Rivanna River Reservoir, the main drinking water supply for the City of

Charlottesville and Albemarle County. A toxic spill into this Reservoir from an accident on the Bypass could shut down the Reservoir for an indefinite amount of time, leaving the community without a safe drinking water supply. There are also serious environmental impacts to endangered species and Native American archaeological sites.

Due to the very serious impacts on our community posed by the construction of this Bypass, we believe it is imperative that the public should be given an opportunity for real and significant input on this project. That includes notification to the public at least 30 days in advance of the hearing, project information being made available to the public at least 30 days in advance of the hearing, and the draft Environmental Assessment being made available to the public at least 30 days in advance of the hearing. The public should be allowed to submit written and oral comments at the hearing as well as written comments afterwards for a reasonable amount of time (at least two weeks).

We also request that the public hearing not be scheduled during June, July, or August since the community's participation may be limited during those months due to vacations and community events.

We ask you to honor our requests in the name of transparency and good governance.

Thank you.

Sincerely,



Dennis S. Rooker
Chair, Jack Jouett Bypass Advisory Committee
Jack Jouett Representative, Albemarle County Board of Supervisors

DSR:dsm

cc: Charlottesville-Albemarle Metropolitan Planning Organization
Albemarle County Board of Supervisors
Jack Jouett Bypass Advisory Committee
James Utterback, PMP, District Administrator, VDOT
Jim Rich, Culpeper District Representative, Commonwealth Transportation Board
Irene Rico, Division Administrator, Federal Highway Administration