



COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
THE JOHN A. WILSON BUILDING
1350 PENNSYLVANIA AVENUE, NW
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20004

TOMMY WELLS
Councilmember, Ward 6
Chairperson
Committee on Judiciary and Public Safety

Committee Member
Education
Transportation and the Environment
Human Services
Workforce and Community Affairs

October 18, 2013

Michael Hicks, Environmental Engineer
Federal Highway Administration
District of Columbia Division
1990 K Street NW, Suite 510
Washington, DC 20006-1103

Faisal Hameed, Ph.D., Manager
Project Development & Environmental Division
District Department of Transportation
55 M Street SE, Suite 400
Washington, DC 20003

Re: Virginia Avenue Tunnel Reconstruction Project

Dear Mr. Hicks and Dr. Hameed:

As I have expressed in earlier correspondence, I believe our District residents are entitled to feel confident that their properties and families will remain safe during and after the construction of the CSX Virginia Avenue Tunnel. While I strongly believe that freight rail should not be increasing its operations through Washington, DC I believe that it is critical that residents receive clear and direct answers through the NEPA process.

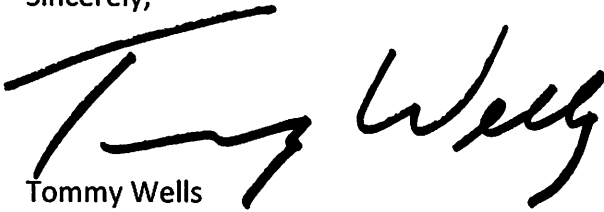
I have heard from many of my constituents and ask that you analyze a build alternative that reroutes trains for at least the period of construction. I urge you to conduct a thorough analysis of this as an option with special emphasis on possible shared use of the Norfolk Southern tracks and respond to me in writing with your findings.

The DEIS offers alternatives that reconstruct the tunnel for three to six years within the immediate proximity of an active freight rail line, a major highway, and historic and new residential and commercial properties. Conducting such a complex construction project while running double-stacked trains in the construction zone increases derailment risks, exposure to hazardous contaminants, and property damage. We must work together to minimize all these threats and protect the health and safety of DC residents.

An alternative that reroutes trains during construction would significantly reduce health and safety concerns by minimizing the construction footprint and duration of the project as trains would not run in open trenches or along temporary tracks.

I ask also that you uphold transparency and open government in these final stages of NEPA and respond to all resident inquiries including the right of way CSX requires on public land. The public should understand: 1) what the existing CSX right of way is; 2) what additional right of way will be granted under the various build alternatives; 3) which federal or DC entities or persons must authorize these decisions; and 4) how DC will benefit from granting additional right of way.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tommy Wells". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "T" and "W".

Tommy Wells
Councilmember, Ward 6

cc:

Christopher Lawson, Division Administrator, District of Columbia Division, FHWA
Terry Bellamy, Director, District of Columbia Department of Transportation