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## Councilmembers Commended for Requesting CSX Tunnel Expansion Delay Pending Oversight

DCSafeRail, the grassroots organization against the current, unsafe plan by CSX to expand its rail tunnel in Southeast, commended Council Chairman Phil Mendelson and Ward 3 Councilmember Mary Cheh for their letter to DDOT Acting Director Mathew Brown requesting that DDOT postpone issuing any approvals or permits or providing the Record of Decision for the proposal until September 15, 2014. This will allow the Council to hold a hearing on August 26 and consider DDOT's answers and the public testimony on the CSX proposal.

The Mendelson/Cheh letter asks DDOT to explain the strong implication that the "'no build' option was never seriously considered" in the recently completed FEIS when DDOT promised to "expedite approvals" four years earlier. The letter also states that it is "imperative" that the Council be able to provide a public forum in which DDOT can provide long-awaited answers prior to final agency action.

"We want to thank Chairman Mendelson and Councilmember Cheh for this appeal to DDOT and for the opportunity to present our case at the August 26 hearing," said Helen Douglas of DCSafeRail. "The pre-approvals by DDOT are just one of the many questions that the Council needs to explore at the hearing and in the comprehensive rail study that it is undertaking. In fact, the final decisions on the CSX Tunnel should come after the study is completed and all parties have had an opportunity to consider its conclusions."

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