



Improve I-81 Chamber Coalition

January 31, 2018

The Honorable Mark Warner
United States Senate
703 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Tim Kaine
United States Senate
231 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Bob Goodlatte
United States House of Representatives
2309 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Morgan Griffith
United States House of Representatives
2202 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Barbara Comstock
United States House of Representatives
229 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Members of the Virginia Congressional Delegation:

We are writing to you as the representatives of 1000s of businesses and tens of thousands of employee commuters along Interstate 81 (I-81) in Virginia's Shenandoah Valley. With this letter we are also adding our support of a recent letter you received from 16 members of the Virginia General Assembly regarding assistance for improvements to this heavily trafficked section of I-81.

I-81 is not only a major transportation network in the Shenandoah Valley, but also a transportation and economic link running north and south in the eastern U.S. All regional and national transportation projections show I-81 level of traffic increasing, particularly as a primary corridor moving goods from southern states to and from northeastern states.

We understand that you are aware of the significant need for improvements to increase safety and relieve congestion on I-81. The issues continue to escalate as accidents increase, truck volume is

well over the capacity it was designed for and projections indicate that automobile and truck patterns will continue on an upward trend. Lack of funding is a common theme when we appeal to State and Federal transportation officials and elected leaders for support, but in this case we believe that the magnitude of the need requires an urgent review of identified short and mid-range projects in addition to a long-term plan for I-81 and appropriate funding to see them through to completion.

Routine maintenance and planned interchange improvements have helped keep I-81 traffic moving, but long-term planned improvements have been overlooked. I-81 south of I-64 has seen some improvements with truck climbing lanes and select widening in spots, but there has been relatively little major capital investment in improvements along the northern section of I-81 for many years. We feel that it is time for a commitment to a long-range plan for improving I-81 traffic flow and safety giving our residents and businesses a comfort level that future needs are being addressed. This should not however be at the expense of continued, intentional, movement on short and mid-range improvements that help us see immediate results.

We respectfully request that you appeal to the current Administration and work collaboratively to secure funding solutions that will address this significant need. Again, I-81 is not only a major transportation artery where we live and work, but also a transportation and economic link running north and south in the eastern U.S. Ensuring orderly interstate commerce by automobile and truck is still a primary function of the Federal government and I-81 most certainly falls under this role.

A confirmation of your commitment to work on this issue this year in Congress would be greatly appreciated. Thank you in advance for your attention to this urgent request. Please don't hesitate to contact us with questions or if you need additional information.

Respectfully submitted,



Sharon Baroncelli, Executive Director
Shenandoah County Chamber of Commerce



Niki Foster Cales, President & CEO
Front Royal Warren County Chamber of Commerce



Richard Kennedy, President & CEO
Top of Virginia Chamber of Commerce



Annette Medlin, President & CEO
Greater Augusta Regional Chamber of Commerce



Frank Tamberrino, President & CEO
Harrisonburg-Rockingham Chamber of Commerce