

June 8, 2008

Roger Boothe
VDOT Project Manager
6400 Commerce Street
Springfield, VA 22150

RE: Design Flaw of the HOT Lanes Project Sound Barriers

Dear Mr. Boothe,

I wrote to you recently about the design flaw in the HOT Lanes Project Sound Barriers. As a homeowner in the Lafayette Village Community with property adjacent to the berm that separates Lafayette Village from I-495, and as a scientist, I decided to measure the sound levels from I-495. I thought that real numbers might be more convincing than statements about how the noise "might" be a problem.

Using a standard sound meter, I made measurements of the background noise levels at 6:30 AM and 6:15 PM on two separate days. At a point inside the berm, at the rear of my property, the noise from I-495 was 63 to 68 decibels (dB). At the top of the berm, just past the tree line (approximately 50-70 feet east of the power pylons) the sound was 69 to 72 dB. The "sound deadening" of the berm can be attributed entirely to the increased distance from I-495, since sound levels decrease with distance, and the foliage of the trees which tends to disperse sound. In other words, the berm itself is completely ineffective in deadening the sound of traffic on I-495.

As a homeowner in Lafayette Village, I have several concerns about the proposed HOT Lanes and the planned absence of sound barriers along the stretch of the Beltway behind my property. The sound level is already at an intensity that may be harmful to the health of residents. Please see the attached pages. Constructing the HOT Lanes without sound barriers will decrease the distance to the sound source. At the same time, since there will be more vehicles on I-495 the sound intensity will increase. The result will be a significant increase in noise at our homes. Even a very modest increase in the sound levels will begin to pose a serious threat to the health of residents of Lafayette Village.

Given the information I have presented, I ask you to reconsider the decision not to build sound barriers along the portion of I-495 next to Lafayette Village. I am passing along this information to the Board of the Lafayette Village Community Association. I believe it supports any planned legal action should you not reconsider.

Sincerely,

A large black rectangular redaction box covering the signature area.

cc: Joaquin Tremols, LVCA President