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October 15, 2021

Ms. Jeanette Mar
 Environmental Program Manager
 Federal Highway Administration, Maryland Division
 George H. Fallon Federal Building
 31 Hopkins Plaza, Suite 1520
 Baltimore, Maryland 21201

Mr. Jeff Folden
 Deputy Project Director
 I-495 and I-270 P-3 Project Office
 Maryland Department of Transportation State Highway Administration
 707 North Calvert Street, Mail Stop P-601
 Baltimore Maryland 21202

Dear Ms. Mar and Mr. Folden:

We are writing on behalf of the Mayor and Counsel of the City of Rockville to request an extension of the comment period for the Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement (SDEIS) for the I-495 & I-270 Managed Lanes Study, which was announced in the Federal Register on October 1. The announced public comment period for the SDEIS is 45 days from October 1 to November 15, with one day for public hearing sessions.

Forty-five days, of which only 29 are working days, is woefully insufficient time for meaningful public review and comment. By contrast, the earlier Draft Environmental Impact Assessment (DEIS) had a 123-day comment period. The timing is even more inadequate considering that, according to your agencies' posted project schedule, this is the public's last opportunity to comment during the NEPA process.

The SDEIS is over 8,000 pages and cross-references the 19,000-page DEIS. This is a voluminous amount of information to review and understand and such a process takes time. Furthermore, the COVID-19 pandemic and delta variant are still at large making visits to review the printed documents and participation more risky and more difficult for our residents.

As you know, the City of Rockville and its residents are directly affected by this proposed project. This project is massive in terms of cost, scale and timeframe. In particular, our residents are greatly concerned about this project's physical and equity impacts on their communities, encroachment on their lands, effects on traffic, and the high tolls. Considering the lengthy history and numerous stakeholders for this project, there is no reason now to curtail opportunities for meaningful public comment on the SDEIS.

Due to the points made above, we respectfully and urgently request an extension of the comment period to no less than 120 days, or January 31, 2022.

Sincerely,

MAYOR
 Bridget Donnell Newton

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 David Myles
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