Testimony Regarding the ICC, by Mark R. Adelman

Because the January 22 public hearings had to be re-scheduled, and because I have a prior commitment on January 29, I am submitting my comments, via your Website, in written form.

Please note that I am a long time resident of Kensington Heights, that I routinely drive all over Montgomery County (and also use public transportation), and that I am neither a "NIMBY" nor a "tree-hugger". The ICC (if built) will come nowhere near my home, nor will it have any direct impact on my driving. Nevertheless, I strongly oppose both of the "build options". Which is to say that I strongly support the misnamed "no-build" option, the option that should more properly be called the "wise-upgrade" option.

My readings (of MSHA publications and others), my observations, and my experience all convince me of the following:

1. Neither of the build options will make a serious improvement in the transportation problems we currently face, nor will they reduce the rate at which those problems are going to worsen. Poorly-controlled growth, and inadequate planning of (and funding for) "adequate public facilities", are responsible for these problems and only reversal of these flawed public policies hold any promise of ameliorating the problems.

2. If the ICC is built, it will encourage more uncontrolled growth, with the immediate result that any short-term and very local gains in traffic flow will be quickly reversed. And in fact we will take "two steps back" for any one step forward. Why? Because we will have again fed the uninformed driving public the false message that the way to solve commuting problems is to build more roads. A fallacy that we have proven here in Montgomery Country and one that has been learned in countless communities across the nation.

3. The funds that would be wasted to construct the ICC would be FAR more wisely spent on the numerous small road projects that are languishing in limbo because we lack the funds, and the leadership, to get these small (and thus not glamorous), but important, projects done. And some of the funds that would NOT be spent to finance the ICC could be spent on public transportation - as well as the yawning needs of our schools, disadvantaged citizens, etc. And that is to speak only of Montgomery County. Building the ICC would drain the coffers - for years to come - that are the source of funding for transportation projects across the State of Maryland. What of the needs of all those other counties?

4. I share the conviction of thousands of other citizens that one major pressure to build the ICC comes NOT from the ill-informed, but from those who are well informed as to personal financial gains they stand to realize if either of the build options is chosen.

Therefore, as an informed, experienced, and concerned citizen, I urge that NEITHER of the ICC "build options" be selected and that, instead, we chose the "wise-build" option, the only realistic and fiscally conservative option we have, to begin addressing the enormous (and growing) transportation problems of our (and neighboring) counties.

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