

Vote “Yes” for Dulles Rail

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The proposed sales tax referendum on the ballot on November 5 is critically important to the Northern Virginia region and most especially to those of us who live in the Dulles Corridor. If the referendum passes, the half-cent sales tax it will impose will raise \$5 billion over the next 20 years to help resolve our transportation woes. For residents of the Dulles Corridor, passage means a down payment on rail service seamlessly connecting West Falls Church to Dulles Airport and beyond into Loudoun County.

There simply is not land available to widen Route 7 and the Dulles Toll Road amply to meet our transportation needs. And adding buses to the congestion on the roads will not resolve our problem. The Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) federally required process that is just being concluded provided conclusive evidence of the need for rail as did 8 out of 10 people who spoke at public hearings during the draft EIS process.

The strongest statement that can be made in support of Dulles Rail is a yes vote on the half-cent sales tax referendum. A yes vote will send a signal to our Congressional delegation that the citizens are willing to pay their part for better transportation and that the U.S. Congress needs to come up with its half of the more than three billion dollars in cost.

Approval of the referendum will smooth the way for the establishment of a special tax district in the corridor for landowners whose properties will increase in value with the rail to pay an additional tax to help pay for it. And availability of the funds from the sales tax may reduce any need to raise tolls on the toll road.

The nice thing about this referendum is that the money we raise stays in Northern Virginia to be spent only on projects in our region. Our own local Northern Virginia Transportation Authority made up of our local elected officials and private citizens will say where the money is spent. Of the projects listed in the legislation, Dulles Rail gets the greatest amount.

If you share my concerns about the environment, you will vote for the referendum; nearly half the money goes to mass transit. That should help our air quality problem. If you support smart growth as I do, you can vote for this referendum because it provides the multi-modal transportation infrastructure to support smart growth.

As for the sales tax, it will not apply to food and prescription drugs. It is the only tax that has broad enough support for passage. And its broad nature means it will be paid by everyone including those who travel through our community.

And we all have a concern for quality of life. I believe rail will advance the quality of life in our region educationally, culturally, and economically. To make rail in the Dulles Corridor happen, we need a strong yes vote on November 5. See you at the polls.