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CONGRESSIONAL NEWS  
**FRANK R. WOLF**

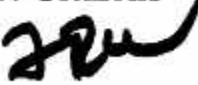
Member of Congress  10th District, Virginia



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**To:** Interested 10<sup>th</sup> District Citizens  
**From:** Rep. Frank R. Wolf   
**Date:** October 16, 2006  
**Re:** Dulles Greenway Toll Increase

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Knowing of your interest in transportation issues, I want to share with you the enclosed testimony I submitted to the Virginia General Assembly's House Appropriations Subcommittee on Transportation at a hearing held today on the proposed Dulles Greenway Toll Increase.

I continue to believe the increase in tolls proposed by the Greenway owners is exorbitant and unfair to northern Virginia commuters.

I hope you find this information helpful.

Best wishes.

**Statement of Congressman Frank R. Wolf**  
**House Appropriations Subcommittee on Transportation**  
**October 16, 2006**  
**Proposed Dulles Greenway Toll Increase**

Chairman May, I appreciate the opportunity to submit this statement to the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Transportation and appreciate your personal attention to the proposal pending before the Virginia State Corporation Commission to raise the tolls on the Dulles Greenway.

As you know, TRIPS II, the owner of the Greenway, has proposed to increase the toll on the 14-mile road from today's rate of \$2.70 to \$4 on January 1, 2009. Additional increases would move the toll to \$4.50 on July 1, 2010, and to \$4.80 on January 1, 2012.

This is an issue of critical importance in my congressional district. It directly affects thousands of my constituents who use the Dulles Greenway as a daily commuter route and who could face a serious financial burden should the proposed increases be permitted.

If the tolls are raised as proposed, the Dulles Greenway would be one of the most expensive toll roads in the country, equating to 34 cents-per-mile to drive the entire length of the road at a toll of \$4.80. And for a driver who pays at the main Greenway toll gate and takes the first exit at Route 606 – about a mile on the road – the toll is the same as driving the entire length. In 2012 under the proposed toll hike, that driver would pay \$4.80 per mile and others who don't use the entire length of the toll would be socked with a much higher rate than 34 cents-per-mile.

Let me share some comparisons with other toll roads across the country:

- I-95 in Maryland – 5 cents-per-mile.
- The New Jersey Turnpike – less than 6 cents-per-mile.
- Indiana Toll Road, also owned by the same overseas company that owns the Greenway – less than 3 cents-per-mile
- Powhite Parkway in Virginia – 14 cents-per-mile.
- Massachusetts Turnpike – less than 5 cents-per-mile.
- Pennsylvania Turnpike – less than 6 cents-per-mile.

I believe the Greenway owners are taking advantage of the fact that the Greenway is for many in northern Virginia the only commuter route they can use that provides a way to commute east without sitting in gridlocked traffic. From the beginning, this road was to be a public/private partnership. Today, there is no public in this partnership. The owners don't live here. Their families and neighbors don't use the Greenway. TRIPS II is owned by Macquarie Bank of Australia.

This company is ambitiously buying toll roads across our country. In order to make a profit, the company has turned to aggressive tolling on the backs of the driving public. I have heard reports that this company says it is losing money on the Greenway toll road and needs to raise the tolls. My staff found on the company's Web site that Macquarie Bank made more than \$1.1 billion Australian dollars last year. I just don't believe that allowing this company to turn

the Greenway into a cash cow is what a public/private partnership should be. The description "price gouging" comes to mind.

According to the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT), the Dulles Greenway averages 64,000 trips per day. The current toll of \$2.70 equates to more than \$172,800 per day or \$63 million per year in revenue for TRIP II. If the number of trips per day on this road remained static – which any fair-minded person knows will not be the case – total annual revenue generated for TRIP II based on a \$4.80 toll would be more than \$112 million per year. That would be an almost 100 percent increase in revenue over a six-year period.

I believe it is important to note that the American Automobile Association (AAA) has become involved in advocating against the toll hike and has raised a point that should resonate with everyone. Other commuters in most of Virginia do not have to pay a toll to commute to and from work. But many commuters who live west of the Washington Metropolitan Area have little choice but to take the Greenway. These commuters are being unfairly singled-out and any action that would almost double the cost for a round-trip on the Greenway for these drivers should be denied. Increasing this toll will push more commuters onto Route 7 thereby making this road more congested.

I'm sure many northern Virginia residents looked at the cost of commuting and paying tolls when deciding where to live. Commuters today who use the Greenway 50 weeks-per-year pay \$1,350 annually for their weekday round trips on the Greenway. If the State Corporation Commission approves the Greenway owners' requested increase, in 2012, the same commuter will pay \$2,400 per year, almost triple the cost since 1995 when the road was built, just to use the Greenway every day. Most families, and rightly so, would not factor in a 100 percent increase in six years. This is not a fair return on the cost of owning this road.

Mr. Chairman, TRIP II's request to the SCC to raise the Greenway tolls cites the Virginia Highway Corporation Act and states three conditions which would allow a toll increase:

- It must be reasonable to the user in relation to the benefit obtained;
- It should not discourage the use of the roadway by the public;
- It should provide the operator with a reasonable rate of return.

To any fair-minded person looking at the facts presented, I believe TRIP II's request fails to meet any of these conditions. There is no way most commuters can budget for a 100 percent increase in toll costs. Many will be forced to make a financial sacrifice in order to continue using this road or choose an alternative route. Alternative routes for many commuters will mean less time with their family and less time doing things preferable to sitting in traffic.

I believe raising the Greenway toll to \$4.80 as proposed for a one-way trip by the year 2012 is nothing more than highway robbery, and I urge the State Corporation Commission to reject this request.

Again, Chairman May, I appreciate your holding this hearing and inviting me to testify on the request to increase the tolls on the Dulles Greenway and the detrimental effect of such an exorbitantly high toll rate on the daily commuters in northern Virginia.