

July 5, 2007

Governor Martin O'Malley
100 State Circle
Annapolis, Maryland 21401-1925

Dear Governor O'Malley,

This is the first time I have written to you. Depending on your response, it may be the last. I hope this letter reaches your desk.

Let me state up front, the Intercounty Connector is not in my backyard. My opposition to this highway is based on thoughtful consideration of the broad impact it would have on our ability to implement a sustainable transportation system that makes better use of human energy and moves people instead of cars.

Over the past decade I wrote more letters than I can count in opposition to the Intercounty Connector. I testified at numerous hearings where the overwhelming majority of speakers expressed opposition to the highway. Poll after poll indicated that the majority of people would rather allocate resources to public transportation and improvements to existing highways. In spite of this, the majority of elected officials continued to support the ICC. Even after the state's own studies revealed that its effect on traffic congestion would be marginal, they continued to tout the ICC as a solution to our transportation problems. What is going on here? This is not leadership, this is democracy stood on its head. The ICC is not about relieving congestion, it is a blatant quest for power by a minority of commercial interests who have the financial resources to manipulate public opinion, employ fulltime lobbyists and contribute inordinate sums to political campaigns (including yours), buying their way into a multibillion dollar deal that will literally pave the way for future sprawl, destroy hundreds of acres of natural park land, disrupt communities and rob the rest of us of the resources needed to develop alternatives.

Over the years, grounds for opposing the ICC have increased rather than diminished. At first it was about forests and wetlands. Then the rising expense became an issue. Then Peak Oil was upon us and we invaded Iraq in a desperate effort to gain control over the last of it. Now, global warming has emerged as a major issue that threatens the entire planet.

It has become apparent that we can't continue to take several thousand pounds

of steel with us wherever we go. Public transportation is our only hope for a smooth transition to the new era. The remaining petroleum should be used to power the implementation of an elaborate system of trains, busses, and trams, as well as bicycle and pedestrian networks. Commitment to such a project would stimulate the economy, create jobs, reduce pollution and improve the quality of life for everyone. It would attract massive attention on a national scale and put Maryland up there with Oregon and California as a state to emulate.

Governor O'Malley, you have a choice. You can go down in history as a visionary leader who made a tough decision to help us turn the corner back in 2007 or you can go with the flow and blow \$3,000,000,000 on a segment of an outer beltway that will never be completed, in which case your legacy will stand out like a piece of a broken bracelet on future maps of the nation's capitol.

Building the ICC is tantamount to a Declaration of Dependence on a dwindling nonrenewable resource at a time when global competition for that resource is soaring. Please help us turn the corner.

Sincerely,

Kenneth C. Ingham, Ph.D.
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