

Testimony of Montgomery County Councilmember Phil Andrews on the Draft
Environmental Impact Statement of the Intercounty Connector January 5, 2005

Good evening.

For the record, my name is Phil Andrews. I have the honor of serving as a member of the Montgomery County Council.

To justify its multi-billion dollar cost, ICC proponents, including County Executive Douglas M. Duncan, have claimed that the ICC would "drastically ease traffic congestion and relieve gridlock for the entire region" (source: 2002 campaign mailer from the "End Gridlock Team").

However, the State Highway Administration study of the ICC clearly rebuts the claim that the ICC would relieve regional gridlock.

Finding #1: The State Highway Administration found that either alignment of the ICC would add more traffic to the Beltway in Montgomery County than not building the ICC.

Pages IV-317-318 of the DEIS, (Table IV-91) shows projected traffic on the Beltway at four intersections in Montgomery County and two in Prince Georges County. Here are the findings of the State Highway Administration for the four Beltway intersections in Montgomery County:

Where the Beltway intersects Colesville Road, the State Highway Administration found that traffic on the Beltway would increase by 3,000 to 7,000 vehicles on weekdays if the ICC were built compared to if it were not.

Where the Beltway intersects Georgia Avenue, the State Highway Administration found that traffic on the Beltway would increase by 3,000 to 7,000 vehicles if the ICC were built compared to if it were not.

Where the Beltway intersects Connecticut Avenue, the State Highway Administration found that traffic on the Beltway would decrease by 1,000 vehicles on weekdays if the ICC were built on the Master Plan alignment and increase by 4,000 vehicles if the ICC were built on the Northern alignment.

Where the Beltway intersects I-270, the State Highway Administration found that traffic on the Beltway would increase by 1,000 vehicles if the ICC were built compared to if it is not.

The finding by State Highway that any alignment of the ICC would add traffic to the Beltway in Montgomery County should by itself be sufficient to end the debate on the ICC.

Finding #2: The State Highway Administration study found that building the ICC wouldn't relieve congestion on I-270 or I-95.

"As expected, the construction of the ICC, under any Build Alternative, would have a negligible impact on freeway operations in the future. I-270 and I-95 are north-south oriented freeways and therefore demand in the future is not expected to be helped by an ICC." (page IV-50 of the DEIS).

The ICC can't relieve regional congestion as claimed by its proponents if it adds traffic to the Beltway in Montgomery County, and doesn't reduce future demand on I-270 or I-95.

Finding #3: The State Highway study shows (on pages IV-327-331 of the DEIS) that portions of the following roads would have more traffic if the ICC is built than if it is not:

- *Georgia Avenue
- *Layhill Road
- *New Hampshire Avenue
- *MD 28
- *Muncaster Mill Road
- *Midcounty Highway
- *Airpark Road
- *Shady Grove Road
- *MD 355
- *Connecticut Avenue
- *MD 108
- *US 29
- *MD 198
- *Muirkirk Road
- *Contee Road
- *Old Gunpowder Road
- *Norwood Road

I've described what the ICC wouldn't do.

What the ICC would do, because of its enormous cost, is delay many needed road and transit projects for years. The state would have mortgaged its transportation future to one highway.

Instead, for less than a third of the cost of the ICC, all of the County's 14 priority transit and road projects totaling \$757 million could be built, several of which would relieve east-west congestion, including:

- *expansion of the Glenmont Metro Garage (\$5 million additional)
- *an interchange at Georgia Ave., and Randolph Road (\$51 million)
- *Woodfield Road widening from Midcounty Hwy to Airpark Rd (\$37 million)
- *an interchange at Georgia Ave and Norbeck Road (\$82 million)
- widening of MD 198
- *widening of MD 28/198 from Georgia Ave to Old Columbia Pike (\$214 million) and from Old Columbia Pike to U.S. 29 (\$30 million)
- *an interchange at Veirs Mill Rd and First Street (\$52 million)

In addition, funding the ICC would reduce the chance of securing funding for the Inner Purple Line, which unlike the ICC would take cars off of the Beltway in Montgomery County and the Corridor Cities Transitway, which would connect Clarksburg, Germantown, Gaithersburg and Rockville to the Shady Grove Metro.

Since the ICC would make Beltway traffic worse in Montgomery County, would do nothing to reduce traffic on I-270 or I-95, would have mixed results on local roads, and would delay funding of many needed road and transit projects, building the ICC would be a historically bad decision.

Thank you.

