



OFFICE OF THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE

Marc Elrich  
*County Executive*

April 11, 2025

Mr. Chuck Kuhn  
Potomac Crossing, LLC  
44112 Mercure Cir  
Sterling, VA 20116

Ms. Libby Devlin  
Rockland Farm, LLC  
16306 Rockland Ln  
Leesburg, VA 20176

RE: White's Ferry Reopening

Dear Mr. Kuhn and Ms. Devlin,

Since December 2020, the Poolesville and Leesburg communities have been deprived of an essential transportation link that served these historic communities for centuries. The demise of the White's Ferry was not caused by natural disaster, lack of patronage, or some other external factor. Rather, the ferry stopped due to litigation and the inability of two private parties to work in good faith to establish a reasonable business arrangement so that this vital service could be sustained.

With each passing year, the connections between the communities served by the ferry have weakened, local businesses have suffered, family connections have been strained, and thousands of additional miles of travel have been required by those who need to travel between eastern Loudoun County, Virginia and western Montgomery County, Maryland. Also, with each passing year, the barriers to restarting service increase as new regulatory hurdles emerge, operating expertise is lost, equipment ages, and people learn to live without the service. The impacts resulting from the loss of ferry service are significant and ongoing.

For over four years, Montgomery County, through my staff, the Department of Transportation, the Revenue Authority, and the County Council, has attempted to find a solution to this problem. We have engaged with you, colleagues in Loudoun County, the Virginia Department of Transportation, our federal delegation, the Town of Poolesville, the Moore-Miller Administration, the Maryland Department of Transportation, and the Maryland General Assembly to seek solutions.

At each turn, our efforts have been frustrated by interstate, interjurisdictional, philosophical, political, legal, and practical obstacles. After years of fruitless effort, I have concluded that the only way the ferry can restart is through your action. I implore you to look past the fraught history of this disagreement and take action to restore this vital service. The two of you, and

likely only the two of you, can end this impasse that has so deeply harmed communities in both Maryland and Virginia.

Along the way, each of you has engaged with us to work toward a resolution; however, none of the potential deals we proposed were sufficient to restart the ferry. With Rockland Farm, LLC, a framework to publicly compensate Rockland for the use of the ferry landing was advanced, but we now understand that Virginia's land use/zoning regulations will likely prevent this from moving forward without significant and lengthy efforts to modify them. Potomac Crossing, LLC offered to donate the ferry equipment but not the land needed for access and operations. Additional public compensation was sought for the land, pushing the cost of restoring the ferry even higher to a point that was not feasible for our taxpayers to shoulder. Given our limited resources and lack of authority to act beyond our boundaries, nothing more is to be gained by Montgomery County pursuing a resolution with each of you independently. I am proposing a financial incentive for the two of you to work together to get the ferry running again as a final measure to resolve this matter.

Today, I am recommending a new project in the Montgomery County Capital Improvements Program. This project includes \$1.5 million of State Aid generously recommended by Governor Moore and approved by the Maryland General Assembly in the State of Maryland's FY26 budget. I am matching the state funds with \$1.5 million of County and Town of Poolesville funds. In total, \$3 million is available in this project in hopes that it will incentivize a compromise. These funds are available for your use as the maximum public subsidy to structure a business arrangement between the two of you that results in the resumption of ferry service. Contingent on County Council approval and appropriation, the funds may be used for property rights, equipment purchase, or other capital investment needed for the ferry. Resumption of ferry service by a set date and sustained operation of the ferry are prerequisites for disbursement of these funds. Rockland Farm, LLC and Potomac Crossing, LLC must reach a binding agreement and provide proof of such to Montgomery County to request the use of these funds before July 1, 2026. If an acceptable agreement is presented to Montgomery County by this date, we will structure a grant agreement to disburse the funds and protect the public investment.

I hope the \$3 million of public funds sufficiently incentivizes you to come to an agreement and I encourage you to meet as soon as possible. If helpful, our Department of Transportation remains available to assist you until July 1, 2026. They are available to provide technical assistance and facilitation services that may be needed. By working collaboratively, you can greatly impact the regional connectivity and vitality that White's Ferry has historically fostered, and that impacts so many regional travelers. It will require both sides to be flexible.

White's Ferry Reopening

April 11, 2025

Page 3 of 3

Achieving a working agreement together will generate a result greater than what either of you could accomplish alone, but it will take compromise on both sides to make it successful. This will be Montgomery County's last attempt at trying to resolve your disagreements and restart White's Ferry.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Marc Elrich". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, stylized initial "M" and "E".

Marc Elrich  
County Executive

cc: Chris Van Hollen, US Senator for Maryland  
Angela Alsobrooks, US Senator for Maryland  
April McClain Delaney, US Representative for Maryland's 6<sup>th</sup> District  
Wes Moore, Governor of Maryland  
Aruna Miller, Lieutenant Governor of Maryland  
Paul Wiedefeld, Secretary of Maryland Department of Transportation  
Brian Feldman, Senator Maryland District 15  
Linda Foley, Delegate Maryland District 15  
David Fraser-Hidalgo, Delegate Maryland District 15  
Lily Qi, Delegate Maryland District 15  
Kate Stewart, Montgomery County Council President  
Evan Glass, Montgomery County Council Transportation and Environment  
Committee Chair  
Marilyn Balcombe, Montgomery County Council, District 2  
James Brown, President Town of Poolesville Commission  
Phyllis Randall, Loudoun County Board of Supervisors Chair  
Tim Hemstreet, Loudoun County Administrator