

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-4802

June 13, 2006

The Honorable Timothy M. Kaine
Governor
Commonwealth of Virginia
Post Office Box 1475
Richmond, Virginia 23218

Dear Governor Kaine,

I am submitting this letter on behalf of the West Virginia Housing Institute and the many businesses they serve throughout West Virginia. As you know, West Virginia and Virginia has enjoyed a mutual interstate commerce for many decades, going back well before my own tenure as Governor of West Virginia.

As I understand, transportation on Interstate 77 through the Big Walker Mountain and East River Mountain tunnels will be inhibited for the next two years due to upgrades being made to the tunnels. I have been informed that the upgrade construction will be carried out during the heaviest periods of traffic and that there are no plans to issue permits for passage of wide-load transports through the tunnels during construction time.

Unfortunately, this decision will force many West Virginia businesses who regularly utilize these types of loads through the tunnels to find alternate routes that are more costly and time-consuming. Some of the increased costs per shipment could run more than several hundred dollars greater than expected. This decision also has tremendous potential to cause serious ramifications to housing sales in the near future due to the fact that many new housing starts in West Virginia and southwest Virginia are homes manufactured in a factory. Ultimately, it will be more than difficult for these businesses to easily absorb the excessive costs.

Governor Kaine, I encourage you to see that Virginia eases the restrictions through the Big Walker Mountain and East River Mountain tunnels allowing the manufactured housing industry to ship their goods during heavier traveled periods of the day. Thank you for your consideration of this matter and I look forward to working with you for the continued benefits for our states.

Sincerely,



John D. Rockefeller IV