



Governor Jack Markell
Tatnall Building
William Penn Street, 2nd Fl.
Dover, DE 19901

March 18, 2011

Dear Governor Markell,

On behalf of the undersigned organizations, we encourage you to appoint a Secretary for the Department of Transportation who (a) is committed to using all of DelDOT's resources to encourage sustainable, and affordable, patterns of development (b) has a successful background in mass transit and non-motorized transportation and (c) recognizes that the State cannot continue to use taxpayer dollars to subsidize sprawl and new home prices.

While a conventional selection for your next Secretary would be another traffic engineer, we recommend that you also consider candidates whose primary professional qualifications are in planning or who have shown an ability to promote more sustainable development patterns. The successful candidate should also have the political savvy to creatively engage the special interests who are invested in the current pattern of growth so that they can perceive business opportunities in helping Delaware grow in a way that is not ruinously expensive to State government.

As you know, Delaware is in a difficult situation because of the high costs of building infrastructure for, and providing services to, highly dispersed, low-density development. For example, between 1986 and 2006, the state's *per capita* capital budget increased by almost 250%¹. That increase was *8 times* greater than the state's population increase and *6 times* greater than the increase in total housing units over the same period. Moreover, not only has this pattern of development become unsustainably expensive to the State, it also has left new homeowners dangerously dependent on car ownership because walking and biking are unsafe and impractical alternatives. Without alternative transportation options, Delaware families have become highly vulnerable to inevitable increases in fuel prices. With a growing percentage of their household budget devoted to transportation costs, families in areas of suburban sprawl have less flexibility when faced with unemployment, leaving them at a higher risk for foreclosure. There is also a well-understood correlation between auto-dependency, greenhouse gas emissions, and obesity rates.

Finally, in addition to stemming DelDOT's deficits, it is also critical that the next DelDOT Secretary recognize the impact DelDOT's investment choices have on the character of our communities. By redirecting some investment away from home price subsidies and towards direct and strategic investments in fixed route transit, and in making walking and biking safer

¹ "Trends in Delaware's Growth and Spending", American Farmland Trust, 2006.

and more convenient, we will again start to build the kind of walkable, bikeable, healthy, resilient and beautiful communities that Delawareans want and deserve.

Very sincerely yours,



Mark Chura
Executive Director
Delaware Greenways



William M. Franey
President
Milltown-Limestone Civic Alliance




Chuck Mulholland
President
Civic League For New Castle County



Michael E. Riska
Executive Director
Delaware Nature Society



Sandy Spence
President
League of Women Voters of Delaware



James Wilson
Executive Director
Bike Delaware

Cc: Thomas P. McGonigle