

RECEIVED

JUN 21 2006

County of Albemarle
County Executive's Office



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
1601 ORANGE ROAD
CULPEPER, VIRGINIA 22701
VirginiaDOT.org

GREGORY A. WHIRLEY
ACTING COMMISSIONER

June 22, 2006

Mr. Robert W. Tucker, Jr.
County Administrator
Albemarle County
401 McIntire Road
Charlottesville, VA 22902

Subject: Concerns over Reopening Advance Mills Bridge

Dear Mr. Tucker:

This is in follow-up to my update to the Board of Supervisors, June 7, 2006, expressing the Department's concerns with the Advance Mills Bridge on Route 743. As you know, the bridge weight limit was reduced to 3 tons in 2001 after identifying serious concerns with the structure. A broken truss member was recently discovered during a routine safety inspection and the bridge was immediately closed for repairs. The bridge remains closed currently as parts are being made to repair the structure. The formal inspection report was received while the bridge was closed and it indicates continued deterioration of the structure. Due to the condition of the structure, safety inspections will continue to be performed on a six month frequency. After each inspection, the condition of the structure will be carefully evaluated to determine if it can remain open to traffic. The maximum remaining life of the existing structure is estimated to be 3-5 years.

We expect to have the repairs made and be in position to open the bridge back to traffic shortly. However, local residents have brought to our attention the numerous overweight vehicles that are using this bridge to include reports of fully loaded school buses. This brings serious concerns to the Department and I want you to be aware that if we cannot deter vehicles greater than 3 tons from using this bridge, then we will have to close the structure permanently. Therefore, I would offer a cooperative effort between the Department and the County to discourage overweight vehicles from illegally using the bridge.



1 9 0 6 - 2 0 0 6

Mr. Robert W. Tucker
Advance Mills Bridge

Page 2
June 21, 2006

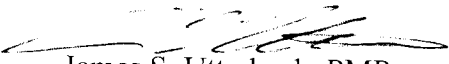
VDOT will install additional signs to further discourage overweight vehicles from using the bridge and will monitor the type of vehicles that are actually using the bridge. We request the County to increase police patrol and strictly enforce the 3 ton weight limit. If the additional efforts to keep vehicles greater than 3 tons off the bridge are unsuccessful, then the structure will be closed permanently.

In addition, due to the overall poor condition of the bridge we need to start the process to replace the bridge so as to avoid a potentially lengthy closure period while plans are developed. Federal bridge replacement funds are currently in the Six-Year Improvement Program for this project. We need the County's support for the replacement of this bridge so as to include the necessary state matching funds in the Secondary System Six Year Plan.

Please acknowledge in writing the concerns and constraints identified with the Advance Mills Bridge and your concurrence with the recommended approach to discouraging vehicles greater than 3 tons from using the structure and potentially closing the structure permanently. I will wait for your concurrence prior to making the decision to reopen the bridge to traffic upon completion of the repairs.

Please contact me if you have any questions or you feel you need any additional information. I look forward to your response concerning the overweight vehicle issue and the ultimate need for the replacement of the bridge. I can be reached at 701 VDOT Way, Charlottesville, VA 22911.

Sincerely,



James S. Utterback, PMP
Residency Administrator

cc: Mr. Brent Sprinkel
Mr. David Pearce
Mr. Juandiego Wade