

ROBERT J. WITTMAN

1ST DISTRICT, VIRGINIA

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TACTICAL AIR AND LAND FORCES

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March 16, 2021

Prince William County Board of Supervisors
1 County Complex Court
Prince William, Virginia 22192

Dear Prince William County Board of Supervisors:

Like you, I have heard from those in our community concerned about the proposed development within the Independent Hill Small Area Plan. As you consider future development in the area, I would encourage you to consider the impact of expanded commercial, residential, and infrastructure on nearby Prince William Forest Park and Marine Corps Base Quantico. Protecting the Chesapeake Bay and our nation's military readiness are two of my highest priorities; and I know they are values shared across Virginia.

Our region is fortunate to have both the National Park Service and the Department of Defense as neighbors in our community—not only do they provide an economic boost, but they represent a relatively undeveloped landscape amid the ever-expanding Washington, D.C. metro area. Prince William Forest Park's fourteen thousand pristine acres of forest are ecologically special and serve the dual purpose of protecting a critical watershed while providing enjoyment to hundreds of thousands of park visitors. As you have heard from Superintendent Gossett, the National Park Services concerns "... include stormwater management, the introduction of invasive species into the park's protected forest, and further complications from that impact, such as habitat loss."

Additionally, as the plans include a portion of the Marine Base Quantico special planning area, I would appreciate your attention to the impact of potential commercial and residential development could have on military training and operations at Quantico. Across the services, military base encroachment issues that negatively impact training and mission critical activities related to population growth are a significant risk to the readiness of the armed forces. Opening rural areas to more intense development and expanding public infrastructure around military bases now, can lead to increased conflict and could ultimately hamper military operations on the base.

As you consider plans for future development please consider, appreciate, and engage with the federal land holding neighbors of Prince William to ensure compatible uses that limits conflict with the mission of Prince William Forest Park and Marine Corps Base Quantico.

As a former local elected official, I appreciate the multiple challenges and competing interests you face as public servants in your community. Thank you for your time and attention to the concerns of residents impacted by this development.

With kind regards, I remain,

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Robert J. Wittman". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Robert J. Wittman
Member of Congress