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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives

May 2, 2003

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Mr. Edward T. Wenzel
Officer, Chantilly Battlefield Association
643 Hillcrest Drive, S.W.
Vienna VA 22180

Dear Mr. Wenzel:

Thank you for sharing with me your letter to Jack Van Dopp concerning an ongoing study to close Routes 29 and 234 inside the Manassas National Battlefield Park. I share your concerns.

I want to provide you with the background on the origin of study. In the late 1980s, there were plans to develop a 600-acre tract of land adjacent to the battlefield. Knowing that this proposed development would threaten the park, I authored legislation in 1988 to transfer the property to the federal government. The measure was signed into law by the first President Bush and the land -- known as the Williams Center tract -- is now part of the park.

Included in that legislation was a provision authorizing a study to determine the feasibility of closing Routes 29 and 234 inside the park. The study was to look at alternatives "in, and in the vicinity of, the Manassas National Battlefield Park." My intention when the bill was drafted -- and remains so today -- was that if it were feasible to close Routes 29 and 234, any new bypass would be built within the park or hug the boundaries of the park so nearby homes or neighborhoods would not be threatened. A copy of the bill language is enclosed. I underlined the sentence dealing with the scope of the study.

Like you, I am concerned by the number of routes being considered far outside the boundaries of the park, but the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requires several alternatives be examined. I recently met with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), which is doing the study, to express my concern. I also reiterated that my intention when the bill was drafted was that any bypass would be within the boundaries of the park or right along the edge of the park.

I firmly believe that as the study moves forward many of the alternatives being proposed will prove unfeasible and be eliminated. I am hopeful that will happen sooner rather than later. It also is important to note that Civil War Trust recently announced its opposition to the construction of a bypass around the park.

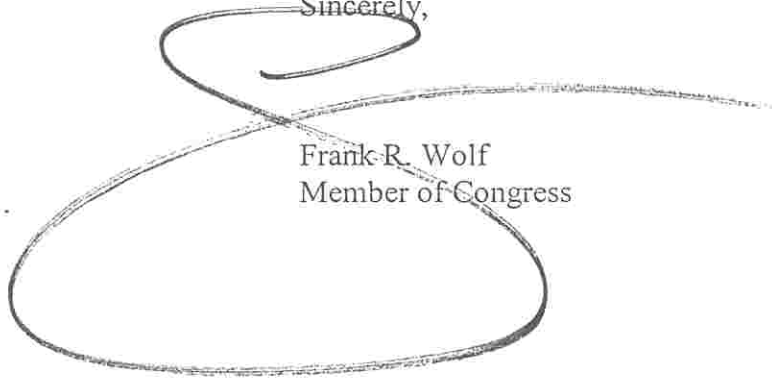
Rest assured that I am carefully monitoring this issue.

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Thank you again for your letter.

Best wishes.

Sincerely,



Frank R. Wolf
Member of Congress

FRW:jtg