

**Chantilly Battlefield Association**  
**Fairfax, Virginia**

June 6, 2003

Rep. Frank R. Wolf (R-VA)  
241 Cannon H.O.B.  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Re: Manassas National Battlefield Park Bypass Study

Dear Congressman Wolf:

I am responding to your letter of May 2 in response to ours of Feb. 27 to Mr. Jack Van Dop of the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA).

First of all, judging from a couple of misstatements contained in your letter, I realize that a member of your staff must have written it since I know well of your knowledge of the issue and the legislation. (At the time I was a board member of the Save the Battlefield Coalition)

To aid your staffers in preparing future responses, I would like to point out the following:

1) The 600 acre "William Center" tract was on the Manassas battlefield and not adjacent to it as was stated. The tract was adjacent to the park boundary on a part of the battlefield not protected by the national park. The tract and the proposed development lay directly on the ground of Longstreet's attack of August 30, 1862. Thus, the massive Hazel-Peterson development and shopping mall was not only a direct threat to the then existing national park, but also would have destroyed the actual ground of Robert E. Lee's most devastating attack of the war under wing commander James Longstreet.

2) The legislation to seize the historic battlefield property and transfer it to the federal government was signed into law by Ronald Reagan, not the first President Bush.

3) Your letter states that a copy of the 1988 bill language was enclosed with a specific sentence underlined. No enclosure accompanied the letter.

My particular attention was drawn to the third and fourth paragraphs of your letter wherein it is stated that it was your "intention when the bill was drafted - and remains so today - . . . that any new bypass would be built within the park or hug the boundaries of the park . . ." and "I also reiterate my intention when the bill was drafted that any bypass would be within the boundaries of the park or right along the edge of the park."

I have the public law [100-647-Nov 10, 1988, 16 USC 429b (excerpt) Highway Relocation section 10004] in front of me, and it clearly states that the Secretary of the Interior, in consultation and consensus with the Commonwealth of Virginia, the FHWA and Prince William County "shall conduct a study regarding the relocation of highways . . . in and in the vicinity of the Manassas Battlefield Park . . .". It further states that the "Secretary shall provide funds . . . for the construction and improvement of the highways . . . if the construction and improvement

of such alternatives are deemed by the Secretary to be in the interest of protecting the integrity of the park." (emphasis added)

The language of the above legislation clearly states that the bypass study would include alternatives "in and in the vicinity of" the park. (emphasis added)

The language does not say that any relocated highways must or would "be built within the park or hug the boundaries of the park" as your letter states. The word "vicinity" without question includes areas in the neighborhood of the park well beyond the boundaries and in no way restricts the alternatives to the areas which you advocate.

Therefore, the question I ask, Mr. Wolf, is how can the integrity of the park be protected if new highways are pushed through existing historic parkland, making multiple crossings of environmentally sensitive Bull Run, or just as bad, hugging the northwest park boundary and destroying critical parts of the battlefield where Stonewall Jackson repelled the Union attacks of August 29, 1862? And what about the noise pollution impact and the viewshed damage of such a highway which would penetrate the park or bearhug the park's boundary?

It is extremely difficult for us to believe that you and your staff do not see or understand the sheer damage and destruction that your intended bypass alignments would do to this national park. And clearly the Secretary of the Interior could not appropriate funds that would result in such damage to this historic resource.

If the integrity of Manassas NBP is violated - and it most certainly would be if your intention is serious - then it would seem that the highway relocation section of the public law is moot and cannot go forward.

Fifteen years ago Annie Snyder led a nationwide coalition to save Manassas battlefield from an ill-conceived, bait and switch development project that defied common sense, logic and the wishes of the American people. If your vision for a highway bypass causes the violation of the existing national park or wrecks historic resources either within or adjacent to the current park boundary, then what you will face is another uprising of the people.

Also, the failure and refusal of National Park Service officials, who are the supposed defenders and protectors of this national park, to speak out against the threats that your "intentions" pose for Manassas NBP is a sad commentary on the Interior Department's current stewardship of our national parks.

Very Sincerely,



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