



COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA

July 13, 2009

The Honorable Lee Frame
Chairman
Orange County Board of Supervisors
112 West Main Street
Orange, Virginia 22960

RE: Wal-Mart Development Proposal, Orange County

Dear Chairman Frame:

As Virginia and the nation prepare to commemorate the 150th anniversary of the American Civil War, we write to express our concern over the proposed Wal-Mart retail center at the gateway to Wilderness Battlefield in Orange County.

As you well know, Virginia's Civil War battlefields are considered the most significant ones in the nation, and the Wilderness Battlefield itself ranks supremely important. As Virginia's population and economy continue to expand, many of our battlefields are being negatively impacted by development. Every acre of battlefield land that is destroyed means a loss of open space and missed tourism opportunities, and it closes one more window for future generations to better understand our national story. For these reasons, among others, we have worked over the past few years to partner with a number of battlefield preservation organizations to save nearly 2,000 acres on 24 tracts on 16 different battlefields.

We believe strongly that land-use decision must remain within the purview of local governments, and we understand the challenges local governments face when trying to balance competing interests. Nowhere are these pressures and challenges better illustrated than in the controversy over Wal-Mart's proposed development at Wilderness Battlefield in Orange County.

We believe that the Wal-Mart project presents a unique opportunity to bring the interests of battlefield preservation and smart development effectively into balance. Fully respecting the authority of the Orange County Board of Supervisors to approve or deny Wal-Mart's proposal, and appreciating the Board's commitment to both the economic and cultural well-being of

Orange County and the Commonwealth, we strongly encourage your Board to work closely with Wal-Mart to find an appropriate alternate site for the proposed retail center in the vicinity of the proposed site yet situated outside the boundaries of Wilderness Battlefield and out of view from Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania National Military Park.

If you and your Board are amenable to this, we stand ready to offer the technical services of any and all state agencies that could be of help to the County and Wal-Mart, including those of the Virginia Economic Development Partnership, the Department of Transportation, the Virginia Department of Health, the Department of Environmental Quality, the Department of Conservation and Recreation, and the Department of Historic Resources.

Thank you for your consideration, and please let us know how you and your colleagues believe we can best assist you.

Sincerely,



Timothy M. Kaine



William J. Howell

c: The Honorable R. Mark Johnson
Orange County Board of Supervisors

The Honorable Zack Burkett
Orange County Board of Supervisors

The Honorable Teel Goodwin
Orange County Board of Supervisors

The Honorable Teri L. Pace
Orange County Board of Supervisors

Julie G. Jordan
Acting County Administrator, Orange County