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VIA ELECTRONIC MAIL

April 21, 2022

The Honorable W. Sheppard Miller III
Secretary of Transportation
P.O. Box 1475
Richmond, VA 23218

The Honorable Sheriff Bob Mosier
Secretary of Public Safety and Homeland Security
P.O. Box 1475
Richmond, VA 23218

Dear Secretary Miller and Secretary Mosier:

I write on behalf of the Virginia Association of Counties (VACo) regarding the recent release of the multi-agency after-action [report](#) on the Commonwealth's response to the massive winter storm of January 3 and 4 of this year. We applaud the Virginia Department of Transportation, Virginia State Police, and Virginia Department of Emergency Management for cooperating with the third-party evaluation and after-action review of the incident. As you are aware, this storm caused widespread disturbances to travel, electricity, and emergency response throughout Virginia, but with particular impact and notoriety along portions of the I-95 corridor in the Fredericksburg Region. Though the report focuses primarily on the response of relevant state agencies to the incident, numerous impacts were felt by local governments.

During the February 3rd meeting of the VACo Board of Directors, the Board discussed some of these impacts as well as the desire to improve coordination with state agency partners to avoid or mitigate future such disasters. The after-action report's conclusions contained the following observations and recommendations of particular interest to local governments:

- The need for the review, expansion, and integration of existing contingency plans such as the *VDOT Interstate Detour Plan*.
- The need for these plans to examine the roles, responsibilities, resources, and tactics of both state and local agencies during this sort of emergency.
- The need for such plans to examine a communications plan that coordinates with other agencies (e.g., airport authorities) and states, as well as local governments.
- The dearth of local agency resource requests from state agencies.

To these ends, VACo offers to cooperate with relevant state agencies and stakeholders to provide local government perspective and assistance in following through on these recommendations. VACo also has an interest in coordinating with relevant state agencies and stakeholders to develop and/or distribute guidance on best practices to our members that will hopefully improve cooperation, communication, and response outcomes between state agencies and local governments for future natural disaster incidents.

We appreciate your consideration of our offer, and we look forward to working with you and with your staff as the recommendations from the after-action report are implemented.

Sincerely,

Dean A. Lynch, CAE
Executive Director

cc: Stephen C. Birch, Commissioner, Virginia Department of Transportation
Colonel Garry T Settle, Superintendent, Virginia State Police
Shawn Talmadge, State Coordinator, Virginia Department of Emergency Management
Board of Directors, Virginia Association of Counties

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