



DEPARTMENT OF THE CHESAPEAKE
SONS OF UNION VETERANS OF THE CIVIL WAR
INCORPORATED BY ACT OF CONGRESS



March 9, 2022

Ms. Ann Wheeler, Chair
Prince William County Board of Supervisors
1 County Complex Court
Woodbridge, VA 22192

Subject: Manassas National Battlefield

Dear Chair Wheeler

I am writing you on behalf of the Department of the Chesapeake of Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War (SUVCW) to ask your support in preserving the integrity of the Rural Crescent farmlands and Manassas National Battlefield by turning down the Prince William Digital Gateway Comprehensive Plan Amendment.

SUVCW was chartered by the United States Congress in 1954 as legal heir to the Grand Army of the Republic, the large and influential group of United States Armed Forces veterans that thrived in the decades following the Civil War and from its ranks produced six American presidents.

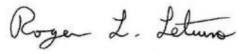
SUVCW currently has more than 6,000 members nationwide, nearly all of whom have direct ancestors who wore the uniform of the United States during the Civil War. Many of our members themselves have also served our country in uniform. The Department of the Chesapeake, a regional representation of SUVCW's national organization, includes the District of Columbia, plus the states of Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, and West Virginia. Our mission is to preserve the history and legacy of the heroes whose service and sacrifice during the Civil War saved the United States of America, freed Americans of African descent from slavery, and ensured the "new birth of freedom" for our country that President Abraham Lincoln referenced in the Gettysburg Address.

The SUVCW mission motivates our members to hold a keen interest in the Prince William Digital Gateway Comprehensive Plan Amendment. We voice our grave concerns over the potential development of Prince William County's Rural Crescent for data centers or other industrial uses. Manassas National Battlefield is a solemn reminders of moments of conflict in American history, when individual soldiers chose self-sacrifice to protect their values and community. The site is a memory of war's lasting effects on civilians and the home front, and memorials to soldiers. We are inspired by these truths and moved to preserve the memory of our Union ancestors. Resulting ecological damage to adjacent historic property will degrade viewshed of both Conway Robinson Memorial State Forest and Manassas National Battlefield to the detriment of the hundreds of thousands of annual park visitors. Further study is needed to assess impacts to air and water quality before any changes in zoning should be considered.

Ma'am, more battles were fought in Virginia than in any other state during the Civil War. We can honor those who served and sacrificed by finding ways to save these hollowed grounds for current and future generations. Our National Military Park Service, battlefield preservation organizations, and living history events do a superb job

of educating Americans about a very difficult time in our history. Our battlefield sites are visited every day by people who want to learn what happened and why. Please keep an open mind when voting on the Prince William Digital Gateway Comprehensive Plan Amendment, don't underestimate the value and importance of preserving Virginia's hallowed grounds as a legacy for future generations.

In Fraternity, Charity, & Loyalty,



Roger L. Leturno
Commander
Department of the Chesapeake, SUVCW

Cc:

Supervisor Angry
Supervisor Bailey
Supervisor Boddye
Supervisor Candland
Supervisor Franklin
Supervisor Lawson
Supervisor Vega