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OPINION

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Board's reversal on bypass broke trust

Trust is the foundation of effective government. The shocking re-vote by the Prince William Board of County Supervisors to approve the unpopular Va. 28 bypass was a breach of that public trust.

At the Aug. 4 board meeting, dozens of community members addressed why building a Va. 28 bypass would have negative impacts on residents. Houses and property would be lost to road construction. Homes and businesses in the area already experience flooding from Flat Branch creek.

Supervisors listened to community concerns, and those who previously supported the bypass instead voted to widen the existing Va. 28.

It was the correct decision for the environment; the bypass would adversely affect wetlands and ultimately the downstream Occoquan Reservoir, our source of drinking water. And since the bypass would negatively affect a diverse, working-class community, the supervisors' vote

also honored the county's newly adopted "lens of equity." It was the right decision to advance a smart-growth approach.

After the vote, community members thought their homes and quality of life were safe, but they were in for a shock! Just a few weeks later, in a stunning reversal, Chair Ann Wheeler called a surprise re-vote on the Va. 28 Bypass. This re-vote was not included on the board's agenda and no public notice was provided. At the meeting, citizens were not allowed to speak until after supervisors had voted.

Citizens were left without a voice, but Northern Virginia Transportation Authority Chair Phyllis Randall, also chair of the Loudon Board of County Supervisors, was invited to speak. At the meeting, Randall threatened to take away \$89 million in transportation funds designated for Prince William if the BOCS did not approve the bypass.

The process, or lack thereof, used to make

this decision alienated local communities, the people supervisors were elected to represent. Instead, supervisors advanced developer goals to open new land for residential development at the expense of the existing community. This has created a serious conflict and broken trust with the community.

The Prince William Conservation Alliance recognizes and promotes the value of including all stakeholders in community decisions. Only by working together, and by respecting community input, can we establish desirable, equitable and sustainable communities that benefit us all.

We urge the Prince William supervisors to act now to implement an honest process that honors the role of both residents and businesses in creating a bright future for Prince William County.

KIM HOSEN

Executive director,

Prince William Conservation Alliance

On 9/11, standing against extremism

As an American, I feel the pain and anger over the actions of terrorists who killed the innocent people on 9/11. At the same time, I also feel betrayed by the action of radicalized individuals who have done or support this crime against humanity.

Along with the millions of other Ahmadi Muslims, I have grown up learning of our religion as a peaceful one; as The Holy Quran says: "Whosoever killed a person [...] it shall be as if he had killed all mankind; and whoso gave life to one, it shall

be as if he had given life to all mankind" [5:33].

It hurt when I realized some so-called Muslims used the name of my religion to justify their atrocities. Most Muslims believe in the same human dignity and life as the rest of our civilized society. We all stand united against all forms of extremism and strongly denounce the terrorism or killing of innocent lives without exception.

MUDASSAR KHALID
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Letters to the Editor

The Prince William Times welcomes letters to the editor from its readers as a forum for discussion of local public affairs subjects.

WRITE: Letters to the Editor

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