Dear \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_,

I am writing you today on behalf of the James River Outdoor Coalition (JROC) to both thank you for your commitments to a complete construction of the T. Tyler Potterfield Memorial Bridge, and to encourage you to carry to completion by replacing the wooden steps at the Manchester Climbing Wall. You may remember that when the bridge was split into two phases and there remained uncertain funding for the universal (ADA) accessible portion of the bridge, we asked you to find the funding so that all park users could enjoy this bridge. We thank you for following through on our request and completing all portions of the bridge design.

While the design of the bridge is now fully implemented, a new issue has come to our attention that directly relates to the complete construction of the T. Tyler Potterfield Memorial Bridge. Specifically I am talking about the wooden steps that provide access for top rope climbing at the Manchester Climbing Wall. These stairs were originally a JROC volunteer work project. Furthermore, the top of these stairs now connect to the head of the T. Tyler Potterfield Memorial Bridge. In 2015, over 120,000 park visitors stepped out onto the Bridge to Nowhere, while in 2016 through October 31 over 142,000 visitors have already used the Bridge to Nowhere. Now that the T. Tyler Potterfield Memorial Bridge is constructed, the traffic on the bridge is expected to increase and the resulting traffic on these stairs will be far above what they were constructed to accommodate. We know that these steps have been flagged as being in fair to poor condition meaning the structure will need to be inspected on an annual basis, ultimately requiring replacement by a new structure within 2-3 years.

Therefore, on behalf of JROC, I encourage the City to totally complete the T. Tyler Potterfield Memorial Bridge by replacing these stairs with the same metal prefabricated stairs that replaced the other set of wooden stairs next to the new bridge. The design and construction documents have already been created at a cost of $21,000 and will cost $150,000 to replace the current stairs. Compared to the over $11 million already spent on the bridge, this final element is not out of scope for this project, and in fact would ensure safe and complete construction for the T. Tyler Potterfield Memorial Bridge.

The bottom line is that these stairs will ultimately need to be replaced. Instead of using resources to inspect and maintain the current stairs and eventually replace them, JROC is asking the city to be resourceful and replace them now. That way the T. Tyler Potterfield Memorial Bridge will be complete, accessible, and a long lasting element of our River Front. Furthermore, funds allocated to the River Front plan can be used as opposed to those from the already tight budget of the James River Park System.

Thank you for your time considering this request. If you have any questions, please don’t hesitate to contact us at jrocmail@gmail.com or at P.O. Box 297, Richmond, VA 23219.

Sincerely,

Will Isenberg – JROC President and the members of the JROC Board: Chris Hull, Greg Velzy, Margaret Maslak, Brian Mutchler, Zeke Zebrowski, Patrick Griffin, Joey Parent, Matt Rosenberg, Riley Gorman, Clint Peters, Weston Spivey, Tricia Pearsall, and Katie Lemmert