

YOUR LETTERS

Bridge is 'ours'

Our Eiffel Tower, Arc de Triomphe, Statue of Liberty and Golden Gate rolled into one—I'm talking about our one and only Robert Opie Norris Jr. Bridge, two-mile architectural marvel and gateway to the Northern Neck peninsula's six counties via its scenic southern route.

Lancaster's arm reaches one mile across "Rapidly Rising Water," aka the Rappahannock River, named by the local native tribe. On opposite shore, Middlesex extends her arm one mile, and they cut covenant with hands clasping 100 feet above sparkling water. Beneath their sheltering arms, osprey and peregrine falcon nest and produce young. Overhead, gulls, pelicans, cormorants and

anhingas perch. West, or up-river, lies the oldest existing seaport in the U.S., Urbanna harbor. Look east, or down-river from our bridge and see the Rappahannock gulped into the mouth of the largest estuary in the U.S., the gem of the Tidewater, the famed Chesapeake Bay, covering all the District of Columbia and six states as well. The Chesapeake Bay is a 4,500-mile estuary, 200 miles long, 30 miles wide and 21 feet deep.

Each morning, the sun rises over the Chesapeake Bay, turning our blue bridge golden-pink before strewing his multifaceted diamonds alongside her trusses. The moon, not far behind, pursues him across the watery byway, beams casting and catching until she disappears in his wake.

Framing our most important natural resource, our beautiful Rappahannock River, our bridge is much more than pretty face, wildlife refuge and historic boundary. She is our "Best in the Show" iconic architectural sculpture, favorite fishing spot, waterman's livelihood, backdrop for our boaters' playground, navigational anchor, and significant economic support.

By now, you understand the operative in this essay is a small four-letter word with huge implications, "ours." Keep her undefiled. [clear dot gif](#) -

**Hilda Page,
White Stone**

No towers

The work that needs to be done on the Rappahannock River/Norris Bridge project is coming. An underwater option appears to be best for protecting wildlife, fisheries and aesthetics.

Remember the old saying "you get what you pay for." So don't shortchange your county for a cheap job vs. an impact factor.

Let your legislators know your opinion on the project. You have a voice now and the people of the counties can make the difference between what is best for their community.

**Kerry Robusto,
Urbanna**

Dominion veep comments on plan

Safety, reliability, environmental impact and cost are among considerations at Dominion Virginia Power as we work to meet customers' energy needs. Maintaining the right balance is important when we build new facilities and when we replace existing ones.

Such is the case with upgrades to the 52-year-old Norris Bridge line, which provides electricity to more than 20,000 people in Lancaster, Northumberland and the Northern Neck. Dominion began working with local governments in 2014 to establish open lines of communication and address concerns or alternatives to rebuilding the line. With none raised and the passage of supportive legislation in 2015 that allows for the crossing of the river, Dominion obtained the permits to rebuild the overhead line.

Just as we are preparing to begin construction, the Lancaster and Middlesex supervisors passed a resolution to bury the line under the Rappahannock River.

Such a monumental change presents logistical and cost challenges. The overhead line is estimated to cost \$30 million and the price tag if the line were placed under the river would increase three to five times. There are challenges related to locating transition stations, the availability of rights-of-way, and environmental disturbances.

Other suggestions have been made about changes on the eve of construction. We have given them careful consideration, but they do not meet Dominion's safety or reliability standards,

the Army Corps of Engineers regulations or height restrictions, the Virginia Department of Transportation requirements and federal navigation clearances on Norris Bridge.

We value community engagement and are open to suggestions. In the end, we must balance our obligation to keep costs low and ensure reliability is high. This project is an absolute necessity to ensure future reliability for Dominion and Northern Neck Electric Cooperative customers—a fact that no one disputes. We will continue to reach out to the community as construction begins.

**Daniel Weekley,
vice president,
corporate affairs
Dominion Virginia Power**