



Mr. Gregory M. Guldin

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Alexandria City Council Members
Alexandria City Hall
301 King Street
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Dear Mayor Silberberg and Members of the City Council,

I write to you today on behalf of the Virginia Independent Schools Athletic Association (VISAA) to express our collective and unanimous support of a new 50-meter, championship swimming venue as well as our commitment to make use of such a facility upon its availability. Each year, the VISAA looks to host its 2.5-day championship meet in a facility capable of meeting our needs and, unfortunately, the state of Virginia simply does not contain enough of these facilities. The commitment of the Alexandria community to build such a facility would bring with it enormous benefits to athletes of all ages, through learn-to-swim programs, high school competitions, and club swimming, not to mention that hosting any championship-level event will provide a boost in the local economy.

Our organization has hosted our championship meet at the Christiansburg Aquatic Center for the past 2 years. The meet brought with it 611 athletes in 2016 and 655 in 2017, all-in-all representing 47 different independent schools from throughout Virginia. In addition to the athletes, there were approximately 150 coaches on the pool deck and upwards of 700 spectators that moved through the stands during the meet. Christiansburg being as remote as it is, we still had an array of committed parents who made the trip, and bringing our meet to a more urban area would certainly lead to an increase in the number of spectators, all of whom would utilize local restaurants as well as make use of local accommodations.

Despite our appreciation for the Christiansburg Aquatic Center, the facility has committed itself to a collegiate conference meet for the next 4-years, coinciding with the time at which our meet must be scheduled. As such, we sought out an alternative venue, the Jeff Rouse Swim and Sport Center in Stafford County, and were able to secure it. However, in our securing the facility, we misplaced a different group that was looking to use that facility at the same time; a group that is now seeking out an alternative venue for their meet.

The perspective my role in the VISAA affords me has really made me more aware of the dire need for more championship meet venues across the state. The city of Alexandria is poised and in a unique position to dramatically improve, certainly the availability of these championship meet venues, but even more so the access to an aquatic facility and programming for people of all ages.

The VISAA can commit to utilizing this new facility the year it becomes available, which will benefit both the needs of our organization as well as the local economy of Alexandria. We unanimously endorse the approval to build such a facility and look forward to building long, lasting, and positive relationships with the City Council of Alexandria and the Advocates for Alexandria Aquatics as well as all those affiliated with the new aquatic facility and its surrounding areas.

Sincerely yours,
Gregory M. Guldin