



Rt. 29 Plan to Fill in Part of the Delaware River will Harm NJ and PA River Communities

The New Jersey Department of Transportation is pressing forward with its plans to:

- Fill in 0.67 to .89 acres of the main stem Delaware River,
- Destroy well over a ½ mile of naturally vegetated streambank,
- Build a 30 foot high wall along the water's edge, open along the roadway to vent noise and fumes into the River corridor,
- Build a deck between South Trenton and the River which will replace residents' River view with a view of a 3 to 10 foot high cement wall and a constructed deck.

All for a highway that is not needed!

Opponents to the project including South Trenton Residents Against Route 29, Delaware Riverkeeper Network, and Tri-State Transportation Campaign -- have expert studies which demonstrate cheaper, quicker, more effective methods for removing truck traffic and reducing through traffic to the South Trenton community. A truck ban, sign changes, and improvements to existing Rt. 129 (originally built for the same purposes but seriously underutilized) would achieve the Rt. 29 goals more effectively. And certainly at a lower cost not the **\$95 million dollar price tag** attached to the Rt. 29 project.

Today, fishermen, children, and the entire community can walk to the water's edge. People fish, swim, boat, bird and relax – they enjoy the River and all it has to offer. **This project will destroy this free and easy access**—stealing it from the community for an unnecessary highway.

The South Trenton community's beautiful riverview will be lost to much of the community replaced instead with a 3 to 10 foot high cement wall the side of a deck to be placed above the existing road.

DOT claims its project will "improve" river access. How? Their new structure will provide but one stairwell to the water's edge. Along the water they assure us they will build a cement, fenced walkway a few feet above the water. How is this River access? Especially when you remember there will be a 4 to 6 lane highway rushing past you from behind with all of the associated fumes, noise and vibration.

New Jersey Fish and Game has stated – on the record – its belief that this **project will harm important fish habitat** and potentially impact the navigational channel relied upon by migrating shad, herring and sturgeon. They are being prohibited from testifying at the upcoming hearing. NJ Fish and Game is on the record for the following statements:

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- the project will destroy riverside habitat important to shad and other migrating fish species which gather there before spawning further upstream, and it will deprive fish species of important, food, habitat and cover;
- "There is no indication that the in-river fill does not impact the river channel which tends to hug the NJ shore near the project reach. Once again we emphasize that the channel is of crucial importance to American shad migrations passed [sic] Trenton and to the spawning activities of the Federal/state endangered shortnose sturgeon."
- "the channel and nearby shallow water habitats are important to approximately 50 species of game, nongame and forage fish known to reside in or use this reach of the Delaware River, including: blueback herring, alewife, and striped bass [recovering population]."
- The project "will effectively cause a loss of waterfront/angler access along some 2900 linear feet of the Delaware River [both down to and along the length of the river] and a loss of shallow water intertidal habitat over that same distance."
- The project will "cause the construction of a water quality/detention basin in the Delaware River's floodplain where stormwater river flows would effectively flush basin sediments and contaminants back into the river."

South Trenton is not the only community that will be adversely impacted by this project. **Morrisville and other nearby Pennsylvania communities will also be harmed:**

- **The Project will substantially increase truck traffic driving on Morrisville's already overburdened, local roads.** According to NJ DOT's own projections traffic will increase as much as 69% by the year 2020. Much of the existing and anticipated traffic is trucks, coming over the bridge and through Morrisville on their way to Pennsylvania's landfills. Increasing truck traffic in South Trenton inevitably means increasing truck traffic in Morrisville.
- **The Project will likely increase flooding in Morrisville and other neighboring communities.**
- This project calls for filling in .67 to .89 acres of the River reducing the width of the River -- and destroying well-over ½ a mile of naturally vegetated floodplain. Adding fill to the River, and destroying and walling off vegetated floodplain will restrict the River's floodway, reduce the River's ability to hold high flows, and likely back-up floodwaters into neighboring Pennsylvania communities. As the closest upstream and neighboring community, Morrisville is likely to bear the brunt of this burden.
- **The project will likely increase air pollution in Morrisville and other River communities.**
- The 30 foot wall along the River will be open all along the new road venting fumes and traffic noise to the River and Morrisville.
- Much of the **project will be built from the River** producing an eye sore and significant source of noise for the Morrisville community.

The project violates almost every goal of the Lower Delaware River Management Plan.

Recognizing the value economic, environmental, health and aesthetic values of a clean and healthy River, both Trenton, NJ and Morrisville, PA have both been supporters of the Lower Delaware River Management Plan. NJ DOT's proposal is contrary to almost every goal found in that plan.

- The project will adversely impact water quality removing the natural filter provided by a natural streambank.
- The plan will destroy the now free and easy river access.
- The proposal in no way attempts to minimize the adverse impacts of development, one of the plan's goals..

- The project destroys a beautiful, vegetated buffer area and piece of open space that helps bring beauty to the River corridor, provides needed river side habitat for fish, and is a haven for River lovers.

NJ DOT has gotten all of the permits it needs to go forward all but one.

They still need a permit from the Tidelands Resource Council (TRC) a NJ State body which holds the State's tidelands in trust for the public.

In May the TRC denied the needed permit. NJ DOT has appealed that decision. The only grounds for appeal are that it didn't get the answer it wanted and believes that another vote by the Council, with more members present, will go in their favor. They might be right.

The hearing is presently scheduled for August 5th, beginning 9:30 am, at the Justice Complex on Market Street in Trenton. Please join us on August 5th to testify or send Riverkeeper a letter of protest we can submit to the TRC on your behalf.