

For Immediate Release
August 24, 2016

Contacts:

Maya van Rossum, keepermaya@delawareriverkeeper.org, 215-369-1188 ext. 102
Robyn Shapiro, robyn.shapiro@berlinrosen.com, 202-800-7407

Delaware Riverkeeper Network Confronts Biased Review Process Demands Fair Review for Headquarters Road Bridge

Tinicum Township, PA: Seeking to defend one of the oldest and rarest bridges in America and to protect a Wild and Scenic stream, the Delaware Riverkeeper Network (DRN) today delivered letters to the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP) and the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission (PHMC) during a Consulting Party members meeting set to determine the future of the Headquarters Road Bridge. Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act requires Federal agencies to take into account the effects of their undertakings on historic properties, and to solicit and consider the views of the public throughout the process. PennDOT administers the consulting party process in Pennsylvania while PHMC is responsible for the conservation of Pennsylvania's historical heritage.

The letters, which demand protection for the bridge and the removal of a PHMC official from the decision-making process, highlight the continued challenges to preserving the historic bridge built in 1812. Headquarters Road Bridge is one of the oldest surviving pier-to-pier bridges in Pennsylvania and the earliest documented example of this bridge type in America.

Despite extensive research and testimony from preservation, engineering, planning and environmental experts recommending the bridge be kept intact, PennDOT has continued to assert that it plans to destroy it. Building a new bridge would be financially and environmentally costly and less safe, and would destroy an irreplaceable part of history. Today's confrontation at the consulting party meeting comes as new evidence reveals a revolving door between PennDOT, PHMC, and A.D. Marble & Company. AD Marble & Company is paid by PennDOT to conduct assessments of historical and environmental resources impacted by transportation projects, including the Bridge at issue.

At the meeting, DRN will ask that Barbara Frederick be removed from working on this project. In 2005, Frederick worked for A.D. Marble & Company and authored a memo that said the bridge has no historical value and should be replaced. Her name is also given as the contact on a recent letter from PHMC stating its sole concern about removal of the historic bridge being that the replacement bridge be "visually compatible." PHMC does not appear to have asked for or to have received from PennDOT any information about the historical or engineering significance of the bridge as cited in the National Register, a significance that PennDOT itself continues to deny. DRN demands that PHMC's recent anti-bridge letter be stricken from the record. DRN

further demands that an independent review by either a new PHMC employee or the ACHP be undertaken.

“Ms. Frederick has an irreconcilable bias that undermines her credibility on this matter and was not disclosed to the Consulting Parties,” said **Maya van Rossum, the Delaware Riverkeeper and leader of the regional nonprofit organization, the Delaware Riverkeeper Network.** “For the integrity of the process, and to ensure full and fair protection of our historic resources, a transparent analysis by an unbiased reviewer is necessary.”

The Delaware Riverkeeper Network has long worked to ensure that PennDOT upholds its responsibilities to preserve the historic structures and protect environmentally sensitive waterways. As a trustee of historic bridges, PennDOT has a responsibility to conserve and maintain these resources for the benefit of all the Commonwealth’s residents. The Headquarters Road Bridge stands in the Ridge Valley Rural Historic District, a National Register Historic District given federal protection when it was accepted for listing in 1992. DRN will continue to ensure the protections for this bridge are maintained and that the process to evaluate its revitalization remains fair to all participants.

#####

[Delaware Riverkeeper Network \(DRN\)](#) is a nonprofit membership organization working throughout the 4 states of the Delaware River Watershed including Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Delaware and New York. DRN provides effective environmental advocacy, volunteer monitoring programs, stream restoration projects, public education, and legal enforcement of environmental protection laws.