



February 17, 2016

Mr. William J. Novak
P.O. Box 107
Erwinna, Pennsylvania 18920

Dear Mr. Novak:

This letter is in response to your correspondence to Governor Tom Wolf dated January 25, 2016, regarding the Headquarters Road Bridge project. I have been asked to reply since this issue is within my area of responsibility.

Thank you for your comments regarding this project and for providing us with a copy of Ms. Auerbach's opinion piece published in the Bucks County Herald. We are in receipt of a number of similar documents Ms. Auerbach submitted as part of Section 106 consulting party coordination for the project. This coordination is ongoing as a result of the project's potential to impact the Ridge Valley Rural Historic District.


While we appreciate Ms. Auerbach's opinions on the capability of rehabilitating the bridge, our utmost priority is to ensure the safety of the traveling public who utilize Pennsylvania's state owned roadways and bridges. To do this, we rely on the analysis and judgement of professionally licensed engineers. We also are tasked with the responsible application of State and Federal transportation funds for such projects and, therefore, have an obligation to design solutions in accordance with State and Federal guidelines. We have determined, after exhaustive study and analysis of the existing Headquarters Road Bridge, that a replacement structure is warranted to accommodate two lanes of travel and the turning movement of emergency service vehicles. A rehabilitation of the existing structure, as proposed by Ms. Auerbach and Delaware Riverkeeper Network's engineer, McMullan & Associates, will not result in a bridge capable of safely meeting the transportation needs of the surrounding community.

It is clear in reading Ms. Auerbach's article that there remains a great deal of misunderstanding over several aspects of this project. For example, although it is true that Tinicum Township completed some widening of Headquarters Road to accommodate the turning movement of a fire truck for a one-lane bridge, this widening was not sufficient. Regarding the crash record, the available records do not rule out the possibility that crashes occurred due to the narrowing of Headquarters Road as it crosses the bridge. Finally, the closure of the Headquarters Road Bridge occurred after attempts at repairing the large hole found in the bridge deck failed. The closing of a bridge is our last resort and this decision is not taken lightly considering its impact on the surrounding community.

Mr. William J. Novak
Page 2
February 17, 2016

I hope this information has helped clarify a few of the claims repeated by several members of the community in the past few months. In the coming months, PennDOT will be meeting with consulting parties to develop mitigation measures aimed at providing a new bridge that is sensitive to the surrounding environmental and cultural resources. If you have additional questions regarding this project, I encourage you to contact the project manager, Ryan Whittington, either by phone at 610.205.6871 or e-mail at c-rwhittin@pa.gov.

Sincerely,


for Kenneth M. McClain
District Executive 6-0