



Public Plans Display – January 16, 2020

COMMENT FORM

Please Provide Your Comments or Suggestions:


Tunnel only !!

Please mail or fax this form to:

L.R. Kimball
Attn: Tammy Sherwin
615 West Highland Avenue
Ebensburg, PA 15131

Fax: 814-472-7712

All responses must be received by February 6, 2020



Comment form received at the January 16, 2020 meeting
Response

Tunnel Only: The project team has evaluated many alternatives over the course of the project. There were no Project alternatives that completely avoided environmental impacts, met all Project purpose and needs, and provided for reasonable costs. The Gray Cut Alternative was selected as the Project Preferred Alternative as it best balances all the operational, safety, cost, and environmental considerations that are components of the Project. Every alternative studied includes areas of cut. The tunnel alternatives consist of a noticeably shorter length of tunnel as compared to the existing Allegheny Tunnel. The intact ridge length will not be the same as today with any of the alternatives. With regard to environmental impacts, the Gray Cut has lower wetland impacts compared to the other alternatives and does not impact the travel corridor of federal and state threatened and endangered bats that all of the northern alternatives impact. One of the reasons the Gray Cut is proposed to move forward is the proximity to the existing Turnpike utilizing previously disturbed area and the edge habitat created by the existing turnpike thus reducing the amount of interior forest impact as much as possible. Each of the tunnel alternatives are located within more of the interior forest, further away from the existing Turnpike. While each alternative contains a tunnel that keeps a smaller length of contiguous forest intact (than the existing tunnel) it is creating additional edge habitat deeper within the forest than the Gray Cut alternative.

While tunnels are safe, an open cut has additional safety advantages:

- The cut alternative has a full width shoulder that provides multiple benefits:
 - a recovery area exists if a driver errantly departs from a lane,
 - should a vehicle become disabled the shoulder provides an area of refuge
 - drivers have additional space if they are adjacent to a distracted driver
- Tunnels require periodic maintenance including:
 - removal of snow buildup in the tunnel that requires traffic to be stopped (potential for rear end collision)
 - equipment maintenance like replacing lights that may require bidirectional traffic in one tube (potential of head on collision)
- Standard speed reduction required for tunnels, 70 MPH to 55 MPH (potential for rear end collision).

The tunnel options do provide a short duration where the driver is not exposed to adverse weather conditions, 31 seconds for the Gray Tunnel for example, but the previously discussed issues have a larger impact on driver safety. The overall crash rate for the Turnpike while approaching or departing the Allegheny Tunnels is more than two times greater than the statewide crash rate for similar interstate segments in PA. It was noted the safety advantage that tunnels gain by offering motorists protection from adverse weather is offset by the increased number of accidents that are unique to a tunnel and/or its operation.



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COMMENT FORM

Please Provide Your Comments or Suggestions:

In my opinion the gray alternative
looks to be the optimal solution.

It would appear impacts are minimal
and would provide a safe alternative
to the current roadway alignment.

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L.R. Kimball
Attn: Tammy Sherwin
615 West Highland Avenue
Ebensburg, PA 15131

Fax: 814-472-7712

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Comment form received at the January 16, 2020 meeting
Response

Gray alternative looks to be optimal solution: The project team has evaluated many alternatives over the course of the project. There were no Project alternatives that completely avoided environmental impacts, met all Project purpose and needs, and provided for reasonable costs. The Gray Cut Alternative was selected as the Project Preferred Alternative as it best balances all the operational, safety, cost, and environmental considerations that are components of the Project. With regard to environmental impacts, the Gray Cut has lower wetland impacts compared to the other alternatives and does not impact the travel corridor of federal and state threatened and endangered bats that all of the northern alternatives impact. One of the reasons the Gray Cut is proposed to move forward is the proximity to the existing Turnpike utilizing previously disturbed area and the edge habitat created by the existing turnpike thus reducing the amount of interior forest impact as much as possible.

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- The tunnel options do provide a short duration where the driver is not exposed to adverse weather conditions, 31 seconds for the Gray Tunnel, but the previously discussed issues have a larger impact on driver safety. The overall crash rate for the Turnpike while approaching or departing the Allegheny Tunnels is more than two times greater than the statewide crash rate for similar interstate segments in PA. It was noted the safety advantage that tunnels gain by offering motorists protection from adverse weather is offset by the increased number of accidents that are unique to a tunnel and/or its operation.

Somerset County Conservancy

Box 241, Somerset PA 15501



PA Turnpike Commission

27 January 2020

Dear Commissioner

The Somerset County Conservancy would like to express its opposition to the proposed “cut” alternatives for the Allegheny Mountain project. Allegheny Mountain is the longest continuous ridge in the Eastern United States running from New York to West Virginia and forms the Eastern Continental Divide separating watersheds heading into the Mississippi River and Gulf of Mexico from those flowing into the Atlantic Ocean. It also contains nearly contiguous forested lands along its spine providing important wildlife habitat and migration corridors. Creating one of the largest transportation cuts in the country through this mountain would have many devastating environmental impacts.

The mammoth cut would in itself directly destroy hundreds of acres of forested mountaintop in addition to creating many more acres of new edge habitat which is detrimental to interior forest breeding birds. The waste rubble would then again destroy hundreds more acres of forest and potentially headwater streams depending on the location of the “disposal site”. The Allegheny Mountain contains important aquifers which would be daylighted including some such as the Mauch Chunk which contains large quantities of the highest quality water in the region. Surface streams including the Stonycreek River and Raystown Branch of the Juniata River would be directly impacted by the large quantities of ice melting chemicals which will be necessary to deal with the worst overall weather conditions on the Turnpike to which travelers can be exposed.

The elevation of Allegheny Mountain results in some of the worst weather conditions along the entire mainline turnpike. High snowfall, frequent ice storms, high wind and especially excessive fog (which is essentially low cloud cover at all seasons) is encountered much more frequently on the mountaintop than in the rest of the notoriously snowy Somerset County. The fog and ice line is frequently just above the west portals of the Allegheny Tunnels. A large cut will also serve as a cold “drain” allowing the 5 to 10 degree colder air of Somerset County to sink down along the Turnpike corridor towards Bedford County. The weather conditions on the very high elevation Allegheny Mountain are worse than the already problematic mountain crossing areas of the Turnpike on Laurel Mountain and Sideling Hill.

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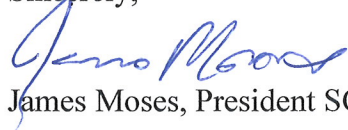
Somerset County Conservancy

This project has been studied for over 20 years and the PA Turnpike appears to steadfastly refuse to look at an option that would optimize environmental concerns, traveler safety, and cost. The idea of building a single (possibly 3-tube) west to east tunnel aligned to ease the east side curve (possibly the "Gray Tunnel Alternative") while sequentially rehabbing both of the existing tunnels for west bound traffic (possibly separating trucks and passenger cars) could result in a beautiful alternative.

Modern, LED lit; spacious tunnels are enjoyed by travelers in many U.S. states and overseas countries—why not in Pennsylvania?

Copies of your consultant's complete report on the alternatives needs to be available for review by concerned parties—can they be made available? The informational type of public meeting where concerned citizens are isolated around a room is not sufficient to share comments and concerns on such an important topic. A public hearing, perhaps sponsored by our local state elected officials, would best have issues and answers freely discussed. Can this request be arranged?

Sincerely,



James Moses, President SCC

Cc: Gov. Wolf
Sen. Stefano
Rep. Metzgar
PA DEP
PA FBC
PAGC
US FWS
US Sen. Casey & Sen. Toomey
US Rep. Joyce

Somerset County Conservancy Letter January 27, 2020
Responses to issues identified

Contiguous forested habitat and migration corridors will be impacted: Wildlife movement will be impacted by a cut alternative. The project team has proposed one dedicated overhead wildlife crossing and two structures over stream valleys to serve as underpasses to facilitate north south wildlife movement. As the project continues, the project team will coordinate with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Pennsylvania Game Commission to improve the design of wildlife crossings.

Project would create one of the largest transportation cuts in the country: While 249 feet of cut is large, it is dwarfed by the "Pikeville Cut-Through" near Pikeville, KY with a depth of over 520 feet, and another larger cut in closer proximity (34 miles southeast) is the I-68 cut through Sideling Hill with depth of 340 feet.

Gray Cut Alternative would destroy hundreds of acres of forested mountaintop and create more edge habitat: The Gray Cut alternative impacts 211.8 Acres of forest. One of the reasons the Gray Cut is proposed to move forward is the proximity to the existing Turnpike utilizing the edge habitat created by the existing turnpike and thus reducing the amount of interior forest impact as much as possible. Each tunnel alternative consists of cut and fill along with a shorter length of tunnel (compared to the existing Allegheny Tunnel). Each of the tunnel alternatives are located within more of the interior forest, further away from the existing Turnpike. While each alternative contains a tunnel that keeps a smaller length of contiguous forest intact (than the existing tunnel) it is creating additional edge habitat deeper within the forest than the Gray Cut alternative.

The waste rubble (excess excavation) would destroy hundreds more acres of forest: The proposed excess excavation area is 98.5 acres and located on an area of a reclaimed strip mine. Forest impacts are not anticipated.

The waste rubble would potentially destroy headwaters: The excess excavation area is located in an area of a reclaimed strip mine with no headwater streams present.

Important aquifers will be daylighted: There will be localized ground water impacts by all of the alternatives. There were 2 hydrogeologic reports prepared to evaluate the impacts to the aquifer for the Berlin Water Authority (located approximately 8,000 ft south of the project). Both reports conclude there will not be adverse effects to the Berlin water supply. The project team will continue coordination with the Water Authority and conducted additional studies locally throughout the design and construction of the project to ensure water sources are not interrupted.

Adverse effects to surface waters from deicing chemicals: The existing Turnpike roadway crosses over both the Raystown Branch of the Juniata River and the Unnamed Tributary to the Stonycreek River. The Turnpike currently uses deicing agent on the roadway over both waterways. All alternatives (cut and tunnel) will cross these same waterways and require the use of deicing material in the winter. However, the alternatives developed for the study will utilize new stormwater systems that will collect runoff from large portions of the roadway directing it into stormwater facilities that will be required to meet MS4 provisions.

Bad weather: The elevation difference between the existing Turnpike roadway and the proposed gray cut is approximately 224 feet. It is expected that either option (Rehabilitation/new tunnel or Gray Cut alternative) will experience very similar weather conditions for the area. Based on the Gray Tunnel length (3,045') and increased length of the Gray Tunnel alternative (335') as compared to the Gray Cut, drivers will only experience 31 seconds less of adverse weather in a tunnel. The safety advantage that tunnels gain by offering motorists protection from adverse weather is offset by the increased number of accidents that are unique to a tunnel and/or its operation. The PTC is continually updating its systems to include the most modern facilities for sensing weather conditions across the Turnpike. This would include a variety of methods for sensing weather conditions and changing operations in response, such as the use of changeable message signs and traveler advisory radio in the vicinity of the Allegheny Mountains. Weather related accidents are not completely avoidable, but today's technologies allow for monitoring of

weather and road conditions and alerting travelers to those conditions in real time. Traditional methods continue to be used to mitigate for severe weather conditions as they occur. For snow and freezing roadway conditions, the PTC regularly applies deicing and antiskid materials, as well as plowing. These conditions including fog can also be mitigated in part by warning systems or the posting of mandatory lower speeds.

A large cut will serve as a cold “drain” towards Bedford County: There are natural gaps in the Allegheny Ridge where geologic formations are interrupted. Ten natural gaps exist in the ridge within a 20-mile radius of the project site. They range from 132 ft to 640 ft in depth and an average width of approximately 3,000 ft. One of the existing gaps in the Allegheny Ridge is the location where SR 0031 crosses over the ridge. That location is just 1.7 miles south of the project and has a depth of 294 ft. The Gray cut has very similar depth but much narrower top width to the natural gaps in the ridge and thus not expected to impact weather patterns further east of the project area.

PA Turnpike appears to steadfastly refuse to look at options that would optimize environmental concerns, traveler safety, and cost: The project team has evaluated many alternatives. There were 12 preliminary alternatives and 8 detailed alternatives (with numerous variations of the detailed alternatives, in addition to multiple alignment shifts and evaluation of reusing and/or widening the existing tunnels). The major rehabilitation of the existing tubes for westbound traffic and constructing a new 3-lane tunnel for eastbound traffic did reduce the overall construction cost slightly compared to the proposed tunnel alternatives, but there is an added increased operation and maintenance cost due to the addition of another tunnel. This option also has additional safety concerns of requiring westbound traffic to diverge prior to entering the tunnel and then merge upon exit. In addition to safety concerns, the reuse of the existing tubes would also need to address the substandard horizontal curves on the east end of the tunnels. The current curves have a design speed of 50 MPH. To upgrade to the current design standards of 70 MPH, the excavation associated with the cut necessary to correct the curves and the area needed for geotechnical remediation due to the presence of an ancient landslide would impact the vast majority of the north facing hill side of the area east of the Raystown Branch Juniata River. This would likely result in greater impacts and a substantially higher cost compared to the Gray Cut alternative.

- **Look at options to minimize environmental concerns:** The project team has evaluated many alternatives as discussed above. No one alternative is lowest in all the environmental resources impact categories, but the Gray Cut has lower wetland impacts compared to the Gray Tunnel and does not impact the travel corridor of the Federally and State listed threatened and endangered bats that all of the northern alternatives impact. The project team will continue coordination with the environmental agencies throughout the design and construction of the project. Additionally, the Turnpike Commission is responsible to follow state and federal environmental regulations necessary to obtain a permit including PA Code 25 Chapter 105, Section 401 and 404 of the Clean Water Act, Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act and the National Historic Preservation Act to mention a few.
- **Look at options for traveler safety concerns:** While tunnels are safe, an open cut has additional safety advantages:
 - The cut alternative has a full width shoulder that provides multiple benefits:
 - a recovery area exists if a driver errantly departs from a lane,
 - should a vehicle become disabled the shoulder provides an area of refuge
 - drivers have additional space if they are adjacent to a distracted driver
 - Tunnels require periodic maintenance including:
 - removal of snow buildup in the tunnel that requires traffic to be stopped (potential for rear end collision)
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 - Standard speed reduction required for tunnels, 70 MPH to 55 MPH (potential for rear end collision).

The tunnel options do provide a short duration where the driver is not exposed to adverse weather conditions, 31 seconds for the Gray Tunnel for example, but the previously discussed issues have a larger impact on driver safety. The overall crash rate for the Turnpike while approaching or departing the Allegheny Tunnels is more than two times greater than the statewide crash rate for similar interstate segments in PA. It was noted the safety advantage that tunnels gain by offering motorists protection from adverse weather is offset by the increased number of accidents that are unique to a tunnel and/or its operation.

- **Look at options to minimize cost:** The Turnpike strives to be a good steward of the environment, they also work to be financially responsible to the facility users and the State. The Gray Cut Alternative is the most cost-effective alternative.

Rehabilitation of existing tunnel with construction of additional tunnel south of the existing tunnel: Multiple hybrid variations of using one or both of the existing tubes were evaluated. Several of the variations included performing major rehabilitation on the existing tubes for use of westbound traffic, build a new 3-lane tube for eastbound traffic and address the substandard curve to the east of the existing tunnel, or rehabilitating just the southern 2-lane tube, abandon the northern tube, build an additional 2-lane and a 3-lane tube and flatten the substandard curve. Both variations have two issues. The first is the 4-lane westbound traffic would be required to diverge east of the new tunnels and then merge west of the tunnels, while this is possible it creates a less than desirable traffic pattern. Second and more critical issue is that both variations require the revising of the existing curve east of the tunnel to meet the minimum curve radius. The required minimum radius and maintaining the elevation of the existing tunnel would have a major impact to the area of geotechnical remediation associated with the Gray Cut Alternative. The impacted area of the ancient landslide would be substantially larger for the alternatives using the existing tube(s) than compared to the Gray Cut Alternative. This would result in increased forest removal and potentially additional aquatic resource impacts.

Copies of the complete report on the alternatives needs to be available for review by concerned parties: The environmental document will be made available for public comment at multiple locations.

Public hearing requested: The project has had multiple public plans displays where the project team has solicited public comment. The Allegheny Tunnel Transportation Improvement Project is fully funded by Turnpike funds with no federal funds involved. The only federal action of the project is the requirement of a Clean Water Act Section 401 and 404 permit from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE). This action places the USACE as the lead federal agency. The USACE will afford additional opportunity for public comment during the permit review process.

Mountain Field and Stream Club

363 Lincoln Street
Somerset, PA 15501

January 29, 2020

Pennsylvania Turnpike Commission
P.O. Box 676767
Harrisburg, PA 17106-7676

Re: Allegheny Tunnel Transportation Improvement Project

Ladies and Gentlemen

The Mountain Field and Stream Club has reviewed the information provided at the public open house the Pennsylvania Turnpike Commission (Commission) and it's consultant L. R. Kimball (Kimball) held in Somerset on January 16,2020. The presentation indicated that the Commission had chosen the Gray Cut as its preferred alternative for improving traffic needs through the portion of the highway near the Allegheny Tunnel. The Gray Cut option, as well as the other cut options, create a permanent chasm through the Allegheny Mountain that will have a devastating effect on the land, water, aquatic and wildlife resources of the area. Motorists traveling the cut options will be subject to the adverse weather conditions found on the Allegheny Mountain such as fog, freezing rain and snow subjecting them to unnecessary risk. For these reasons and many others the Mountain Field and Stream Club does not believe that any of the cut options provide the best solution for the traveling public, the residents of Somerset County, the impacted landowners and the natural resources of the area.

The exhibits presented, while informative, did not provide enough information for the public to review and analyze the assumptions, raw data, technical analysis, cost information and other scientific and engineering reports that led to the selection of the Gray Cut as the preferred option. Without access to that information, it is impossible to formulate an independent opinion as to the conclusions reached by Kimball and the Commission. Therefore we here by request, under the Freedom of Information Act, a copy of the above referenced information that was prepared for this project by Kimball and or the Commission. Please advise as to how this information may be obtained.

Finally, after receipt of the information requested above and some time for review the Mountain Field and Stream Club believes a public hearing is appropriate so the stakeholders can provide constructive comments and opinions regarding the Allegheny Tunnel Transportation Improvement Project.

Thank you for your cooperation in this matter. As a club focused on conservation it is very important to us that an option is selected that meets the needs of the traveling public but also conserves the irreplaceable natural resources of the Allegheny Mountain.

Sincerely,



Randall L. Musser P.E. P.L.S.
Chair, MFS Club Turnpike Committee

cc: Pennsylvania Turnpike Commission, New Stanton Office
Somerset County Commissioners
MFS Club file

Mountain Field and Stream Club

363 Lincoln Street
Somerset, PA 15501

February 18, 2020

LR Kimball
615 West Highland Av.
Ebensburg, PA 15931
Attention: Ms. Tammy Sherwin

Re: Allegheny Tunnel Transportation Improvement Project

Dear Ms. Sherwin

The Mountain Field and Stream Club is opposed to any of the cut options proposed to improve transportation on the turnpike in the vicinity of the Allegheny Tunnel. For obvious reasons, the cut options ruin the hunting ground that the Club has worked for so many years to acquire and preserve. Please insert the attached letter, which was mailed to the Turnpike Commission, into the record.

As the letter requests, the Club needs a copy of the environmental and engineering reports that formed the basis for the decisions reached by Kimball and the Commission. As you know, the Club has always provided access to our land and cooperated with Kimball and their consultants as they studied this area. I would expect Kimball and the Commission would extend the same courtesy to the Club as we both work to reach the best solution. Please contact me at 814-233-0351 to arrange for the transfer of this information.

Thank you for your cooperation in this matter. As a club focused on conservation it is very important to us that an option is selected that meets the needs of the traveling public but also conserves the irreplaceable natural resources of the Allegheny Mountain.

Sincerely,



Randall L. Musser P.E. P.L.S.
Chair, MFS Club Turnpike Committee

cc: Somerset County Commissioners, via email
MFS Club file

Mountain Field and Stream Club Letter January 29, 2020
Response to issues identified**The Gray Cut option, as well as the other cut options, create a permanent chasm through the Allegheny Mountain that will have a devastating effect on land, water, aquatic and wildlife resources of the area:**

The project team has evaluated many alternatives over the course of the project. There were no Project action alternatives that completely avoided environmental impacts, met all Project purpose and needs, and provided for reasonable costs. Every alternative studied includes areas of cut. The tunnel alternatives consist of a noticeably shorter length of tunnel as compared to the existing Allegheny Tunnel. The intact ridge length will not be the same as today with any of the alternatives. With regard to environmental impacts, the Gray Cut has lower wetland impacts compared to the other alternatives and does not impact the travel corridor of federal and state threatened and endangered bats that all of the northern alternatives impact. One of the reasons the Gray Cut is proposed to move forward is the proximity to the existing Turnpike utilizing previously disturbed area and the edge habitat created by the existing turnpike thus reducing the amount of interior forest impact as much as possible. Each tunnel alternative consists of cut and fill along with a shorter length of tunnel (compared to the existing Allegheny Tunnel). Each of the tunnel alternatives are located within more of the interior forest, further away from the existing Turnpike. While each alternative contains a tunnel that keeps a smaller length of contiguous forest intact (than the existing tunnel) it is creating additional edge habitat deeper within the forest than the Gray Cut alternative. The project team has proposed one dedicated wildlife overhead crossing and two structures over stream valleys to serve as underpasses to facilitate north south wildlife movement. As the project continues, the project team will coordinate with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Pennsylvania Game Commission to improve the design of the wildlife crossings.

The existing Turnpike roadway crosses over both the Raystown Branch of the Juniata River and the Unnamed Tributary to the Stonycreek River (including multiple tributaries of each), as well as several wetland systems. For example, the Turnpike currently uses deicing agent on the roadway that crosses the above noted aquatic resources. All alternatives (cut and tunnel) will cross these same resources and require the use of deicing material in the winter. However, the alternatives developed for the study will utilize new stormwater systems that will collect runoff from large portions of the roadway directing it into stormwater facilities that will be required to meet MS4 provisions, providing greater protection than currently exists. Also, water encountered from excavation will be captured and treated as necessary prior to release to surface water systems. A thin section analysis on limited borings confirmed the presence of pyrite. Most of the pyrite occurs as microscopic grains, some of which is framboidal. It should be noted the pyrite evaluated via Scanning Electron Microscope (SEM) does not originate from hydrothermal solutions as secondary depositions as was the case in the Sky-Top Investigation near State College regarding the I-99 corridor. Appropriate studies will be completed as the project moves forward into final design to identify acidic problematic area such that design can minimize or eliminate the risk.

The project team will continue coordination with the environmental agencies throughout the design and construction of the project. Additionally, the Turnpike Commission is responsible to follow state and federal environmental regulations necessary to obtain permits prior to construction including 25 PA Code Chapter 105, Section 401 and 404 of the Clean Water Act, Section 7 of the Endangered Species act and the National Historic Preservation Act to mention a few.

Motorists traveling the cut options will be subject to adverse weather: The elevation difference between the existing Turnpike roadway and the proposed gray cut is approximately 224 feet. It is expected the Gray Cut Alternative will experience very similar weather conditions for the area. Based on the Gray Tunnel length (3,045') and increased length of the Gray Tunnel alternative (335') as compared to the Gray Cut, drivers will only experience 31 seconds less of adverse weather in a tunnel. The safety advantage that tunnels gain by offering motorists protection from adverse weather is offset by the increased number of accidents that are unique to a tunnel and/or its operation. The PTC is continually updating its systems to include the most modern facilities for

sensing weather conditions across the Turnpike. This would include a variety of methods for sensing weather conditions and changing operations in response, such as the use of changeable message signs and traveler advisory radio in the vicinity of the Allegheny Mountains. Weather related accidents are not completely avoidable, but today's technologies allow for monitoring of weather and road conditions and alerting travelers to those conditions in real time. Traditional methods continue to be used to mitigate for severe weather conditions as they occur. For snow and freezing roadway conditions, the PTC regularly applies deicing and antiskid materials, as well as plowing. These conditions including fog can also be mitigated in part by warning systems or the posting of mandatory lower speeds.

Request project information used to make the decision the Gray Cut Alternative is selected as the preferred under the Freedom of Information Act: The PTC will comply with a request under the State Right to Know Act and release final documents dated December 16, 1999 and later completed for the study.

A public hearing is appropriate so the stakeholders can provide constructive comments and opinions: The project has had multiple public plans displays where the project team has solicited public comment. The Allegheny Tunnel Transportation Improvement Project is fully funded by Turnpike funds with no federal funds involved. The only federal action of the project is the requirement of a Clean Water Act Section 404 /401 permit from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE). This action places the USACE as the lead federal agency. The USACE will afford additional opportunity for public comment during the permit review process.



RECEIVED
JAN 31 2020
CDI - L. R. KIMBALL
EBENSBURG, PA

Public Plans Display - January 16, 2020

COMMENT FORM

Please Provide Your Comments or Suggestions:

CLARKE ROMESBERG 650 GILMOUR RD SOMERSET PA 15501
AS A SOMERSET COUNTY CONCERNED CITIZEN.
I FEEL THE 01/16/2020 MEETING WAS POORLY PUBLISHED,
ANOTHER MEETING SHOULD BE SCHEDULED AT BERLIN
COMMUNITY BUILDING, CLOSER TO PEOPLE EFFECTED.
LAND OWNERS CLOSE TO PROJECT WERE TO BE CONTACTED
AND WERE NOT.
I FEEL ANY SOLUTION SHOULD ALSO TAKE OUT
TWO ~~TURN~~ CURVES EAST OF TUNNEL. IT ALSO SHOULD
BE DONE AS CHEAPLY AS POSSIBLE.
THEREFORE I FEEL THE YELLOW CUT SOLUTION
AT AN ESTIMATED COST OF \$378,000,000 WOULD
BE THE BEST PLAN TO PROCEED WITH
THANK YOU! *Clara Romesberg*
814-443-3941

Please mail or fax this form to:

L.R. Kimball
Attn: Tammy Sherwin
615 West Highland Avenue
Ebensburg, PA 15131

Fax: 814-472-7712

All responses must be received by February 6, 2020

Clark Romesberg Comment Form January 31, 2020
Response to issues identified

The meeting was poorly publicized and another one should be held at Berlin Community Building: The plans display was advertised in the Somerset Daily American and Bedford Gazette. Federal, State and local government offices were also notified of the plans display. Since the project inception in 1996 the public plans displays/meetings have been held at the Somerset Quality Inn. Future meeting locations will be evaluated.

Land owners close to the Project were to be contacted and were not: The project is currently in the planning or environmental stages and does not include the task of right of way acquisition. Once the project progresses into final design, right of way acquisition negotiations will occur with property owner notifications.

Any solution should take out the two curves east of the tunnel: Each alternative evaluated eliminates the sub-standard curves to the east of the existing Allegheny Tunnels. Correcting substandard geometry was identified as a project need and must be met for any alternative to move forward.

Project should be done as cheaply as possible: The Turnpike strives to be a good steward of the environment, they also work to be financially responsible to the facility users and the State. The Gray Cut Alternative is the most cost-effective alternative at \$332,400,000 (least expensive of all the considered design alternatives).

Yellow Cut Alternative is the best plan to proceed with: The project team has evaluated many alternatives over the course of the project including the Yellow Cut Alternative. There were no Project alternatives that completely avoided environmental impacts, met all Project purpose and needs, and provided for reasonable costs. The Yellow Cut Alternative would adversely impact a known travel corridor for Federal and State listed threatened and endangered bats. This alternative would impact 154.56 acres of forest and three (3) state-listed plant species under the jurisdiction of the DCNR that were noted as species of most concern for the Project. The Yellow Cut Alternative includes the deepest cut of the proposed Alternatives, at approximately 400 ft. This extensive cut results in the greatest excess excavation quantities of all the alternatives at 25,399,084 cubic yards. This is more than double that of the next greatest amount of excess excavation produced by an alternative. This amount of excess excavation could not be accommodated within the excess excavation area currently proposed for the Project, and additional areas would be required, likely resulting in addition property and environmental impacts. The Gray Cut Alternative was selected as the Project Preferred Alternative as it best balances all the operational, safety, cost, and environmental considerations that are components of the Project. As noted, the Gray Cut Alternative is not without environmental impacts; therefore, federal and state permits will be required.

Public Plans Display - January 16, 2020

COMMENT FORM

Please Provide Your Comments or Suggestions:

- ① Yellow cut is straighten with no curves and would be cheaper saving 300 thousand every year for other projects.
- ② Water concern for cabin well and pond (disturbance of natural water supply)
- ③ Structure of cabin during construction with it being in the middle of project.
- ④ Road access to cabin.
- ⑤ Dust, dirt, noise from project.
- ⑥ Lessen the value of property.
- ⑦ Notification of drillers when on property and just compensation for road to drill sites on my property and adjoining lands. Compensation for tree removal if needed for drilling rig.
- ⑧ Reclaim land that was disturbed by drillers with seed (grass)

Please mail or fax this form to:

L.R. Kimball
Attn: Tammy Sherwin
615 West Highland Avenue
Ebensburg, PA 15131

Fax: 814-472-7712

Patrick J. Krupper
814-267-4161 - H
814-289-9685 - C

Property - 259 Turnpike RD.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Building a killer bypass

After attending Allegheny tunnel Improvement project meeting Jan. 16, it sounds like LR Kimball has plans for the Pennsylvania Turnpike Commission to build the gray option bypass (cut) south of exciting tunnels. I believe a bypass would become a killer for many reasons:

1. Loss of life — A PTC study shows no significant difference in safety between tunnels and a bypass (not sure if this takes in Somerset county weather.) With treacherous weather, a cut would be affected by high winds, white outs, and freezing rain. A dense fog and freezing ice line forms above 2,300 feet. The design calls for a dangerous 2,000 foot long bridge built on a 7% downhill grade and on a sweeping curve. East morning sun would bring out black ice and create a skating rink.

2. Flooding — By removing hundreds of acres of forest land (nature natural sponge) and replacing it with 3.8 miles of blacktop, the run off from 3,000 foot elevation to 1,400 feet would flood Raystown Branch and New Baltimore with every hard rain.

3. No access across top of mountain except for one small game crossing of 600 feet. This could hurt wildlife as predators would close in on this area.

4. Acid mine run off (could we see another I-99 disaster) — Removing 18 million cubic yard of overburden, this would require a several hundred acre dump site. Once unearthed and exposed to air and rain it would create a toxic run off that would affect Lake Stonycreek and Stonycreek River.

5. Hazardous water — Under the mountain is a pocket of high iron water that has over 100 ppm. We still see the

effects of 50-year-old bore holes that are artesian wells leaking out orange water. Could a cut bring more problems like this?

6. Pollute a public drinking supply — Berlin's drinking water could become contaminated from hazardous spills, chemicals and salt runoff leaching into its water sources.

7. Destroying an eco system which has beauty and balance of a forested mountain.

8. Cost — I don't believe cost estimates are accurate. In 2000 the cut costs were \$91 million and tunnel was \$140 million. In 2014 the cut was \$300 to \$694 million. Today a cut is \$332 million and \$702 million for the tunnel. Why is cost so different? PTC says tunnels need to be replaced because of their age.

It was built in 1940 and 1965 comparing to Squirrel Hill Tunnel that was built in 1953 and it's being used every day and has a lot more traffic. There's no talk of tearing them out.

PTC has created this problem by not taking care of them over the past 25 years. PTC has said the tunnels ability to protect motorist in adverse weather is not a sufficient reason to choose a tunnel option. What cost does PTC put on loss of human life, flooding, water contamination, habit changes, and eco system? It seems like \$400 million. Once a cut is built there's no going back. Damage is done — forever.

Here's another option

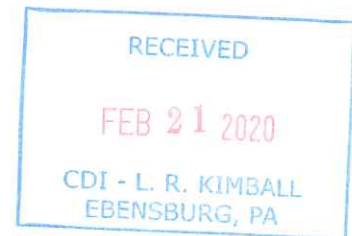
Make Route 219 south a turnpike extension, could put exits onto 219, no need for toll booths with EZ pass. The system interchange would remain in Somerset. This would relieve congestion at tunnels and also in Breezewood with Route 30.

John Fox
Stonycreek Township

Tammy,

Please add
to my other
letter &
sent.

Thanks,
Patricia Krupper



Patrick Krupper Comment Form February 3, 2020
Responses to issues identified

Support for Yellow Cut Alternative (straight and cheaper): The project team has evaluated many alternatives over the course of the project including the Yellow Cut Alternative. There were no Project alternatives that completely avoided environmental impacts, met all Project purpose and needs, and provided for reasonable costs. The Yellow Cut Alternative would adversely impact a known travel corridor for Federal and State listed threatened and endangered bats. This alternative would impact 154.56 acres of forest and three (3) state-listed plant species under the jurisdiction of the DCNR that were noted as species of most concern for the Project. The Yellow Cut Alternative includes the deepest cut of the proposed Alternatives, at approximately 400 ft. This extensive cut results in the greatest excess excavation quantities of all the alternatives at 25,399,084 cubic yards. This is more than double that of the next greatest amount of excess excavation produced by an alternative. This amount of excess excavation could not be accommodated within the excess excavation area currently proposed for the Project, and additional areas would be required, likely resulting in addition property and environmental impacts. The Turnpike strives to be a good steward of the environment, they also work to be financially responsible to the facility users and the State. The Yellow Cut Alternative has the lowest operation and maintenance cost but does not present the least environmentally damaging practical alternative as noted above. The Gray Cut Alternative was selected as the Project Preferred Alternative as it best balances all the operational, safety, cost, and environmental considerations that are components of the Project.

Disturbance of water supply: There will be localized ground water impacts for all of the alternatives. The project team will continue to conduct additional studies locally throughout the design and construction of the project to ensure water sources are not interrupted.

Concern for structure of cabin during construction: The contractor will be required to analyze blasting impacts on the surrounding environment. Further investigations and property owner meetings will occur as the project moves forward.

Road access to cabin: The design of the Gray Cut Alternative includes an access road to the Cabin.

Dust, dirt, noise from project: Once under construction the contractor will implement best management practices to control noise, dust and dirt. They may include working during certain times, applying water to dusty areas, and sweeping roads clean.

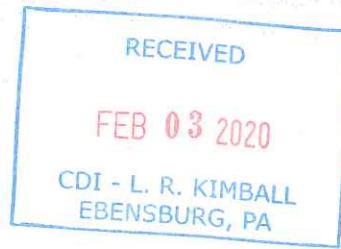
Lessen value of property: The PTC will hold property owner meetings as the project progresses to discuss the project's affect to property.

Notification when drillers enter property: The drilling company is to notify property owners prior to entering property.

Restore disturbed land by drilling: The drilling company is to restore land upon disturbance.

Please add Opinion Editorial "Building a Killer Bypass" to my other letter: The article was attached to the comment form.

Feb. 6, 2020



Public Plans

Ms. Hazel Romesberg
940 Humbert School Rd
Rockwood, PA 15557

Please Provide Your Comments or Suggestio
The plans for turnpike construction
needs to include work on these
horrible curves near the current Allegheny
tunnel. Drivers are not able to
negotiate those S curves.

The speed limits and curves
put drivers at risk.

Thank You.

Hazel Romesberg

Mrs. Hazel Romesberg, Jr.

L.R. Kimball

Attn Tammy Sherwin
615 West Highland Ave.

Ebensburg PA. 15131

Fax 814-472-7712

Hannah Boyer, 19, of Mantua, Ohio, was disabled from a previous accident and was blocking the left lane. A second driver, Mary Stamy, 67, of Pittsburgh, was driving west and was unable to avoid Boyer's vehicle, whose lights were no longer functioning.

After impact, Boyer's car rotated counterclockwise and came to rest in the left lane. The car sustained disabling damage.

Boyer and passengers in both vehicles — Erick Kengni, 19, of Silver Spring, Maryland, and Marion Fisher, 54, of Pittsburgh — sustained suspected minor injuries but were not taken to a hospital, according to police. Stamy and passenger Jennifer Muse, 52, of Pittsburgh, were not hurt. Police were assisted by Berlin EMS.

Three injured

Three people were hurt in a two-vehicle crash Jan. 16 on the Pennsylvania Turnpike in Allegheny Township.

State police said a car driven by

Five vehicles collide on turnpike

No one was hurt in a five-vehicle, chain-reaction accident Jan. 16 on the Pennsylvania Turnpike in Allegheny Township.

State police said the crash happened as drivers attempted to avoid an earlier accident near Tunnel Road. All vehicles were traveling in the left lane. The first vehicle, an SUV driven by Julie Lepere, 30, of Harrisburg, came to a controlled stop in the left lane and was struck by an SUV driven by Samuel Johnson, 25, of Idaho Falls, Idaho.

The crash also involved vehicles driven by Jack Johnson, 51, of Idaho Falls, Idaho, Richard Weidman, 41, of Seven Valleys, and Kyle Johnson, 23, of Fairfax, Virginia.

Four of the drivers were cited for failing to drive at a safe speed, according to police.

Tractor-trailer involved in crash

Coleman Coles, 40, of Lenoir, North Carolina, was driving west on the Pennsylvania Turnpike in Allegheny Township Jan. 18 when he encountered ice and slush on the roadway.

His rig jackknifed and slid across three lanes, striking a concrete barrier with its front end, according to state police. After impact, the tractor-trailer slid west, its front end still in contact with the center barrier for approximately 210 feet.

Coles was not injured. Police said he was driving too fast for the conditions.



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CDI - L. R. KIMBALL
EBENSBURG, PA

Public Plans Display - January 16, 2020

COMMENT FORM

Please Provide Your Comments or Suggestions:

Dear Allegheny Project: Please work on curves near the tunnel. The curves are very dangerous and by straightening the highway + then using the best route to replace the tunnel ~~this~~ would be the best solution to the problem.

The 5 curves and ^{necessary} signs for slowing down are the problem. Reroute the tunnel for safety and best use of less + less land construction.

Thank you for listening.

Please mail or fax this form to:

L.R. Kimball
Attn: Tammy Sherwin
615 West Highland Avenue
Ebensburg, PA 15131

Fax: 814-472-7712

All responses must be received by February 6, 2020

Hazel Romesberg Comment Form February 3, 2020
Response to issues identified

Work on curves east of the tunnel: Each alternative evaluated eliminates the sub-standard curves to the east of the existing Allegheny Tunnels. Correcting substandard geometry was identified as a project need and must be met for any alternative to move forward. The Gray Cut alternative incorporates horizontal curves that meet or exceed the minimum radius of 1,818.9 ft, the current horizontal curve east of the existing tunnel has a radius of only 954.9 ft which is approximately half of the allowable minimum radius as defined by AASHTO.

Straighten the highway and reroute the tunnel for safety: The project team has evaluated many alternatives over the course of the project. There were no Project alternatives that completely avoided environmental impacts, met all Project purpose and needs, and provided for reasonable costs. Each of the design alternatives eliminates the sub-standard curves east of the tunnel. The Gray Cut Alternative was selected as the Project Preferred Alternative as it best balances all the operational, safety, cost, and environmental considerations that are components of the Project.

While tunnels are safe, an open cut has additional safety advantages:

- The cut alternative has a full width shoulder that provides multiple benefits:
 - a recovery area exists if a driver errantly departs from a lane,
 - should a vehicle become disabled the shoulder provides an area of refuge
 - drivers have additional space if they are adjacent to a distracted driver
- Tunnels require periodic maintenance including:
 - removal of snow buildup in the tunnel that requires traffic to be stopped (potential for rear end collision)
 - equipment maintenance like replacing lights that may require bidirectional traffic in one tube (potential of head on collision)
- Standard speed reduction required for tunnels, 70 MPH to 55 MPH (potential for rear end collision).

The tunnel options do provide a short duration where the driver is not exposed to adverse weather conditions, 31 seconds for the Gray Tunnel, but the previously discussed issues have a larger impact on driver safety. The overall crash rate for the Turnpike while approaching or departing the Allegheny Tunnels is more than two times greater than the statewide crash rate for similar interstate segments in PA. It was noted the safety advantage that tunnels gain by offering motorists protection from adverse weather is offset by the increased number of accidents that are unique to a tunnel and/or its operation.



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CDI - L. R. KIMBALL
EBENSBURG, PA

Public Plans Display - January 16, 2020

COMMENT FORM

Please Provide Your Comments or Suggestions:

The more than 5,200 men and women of the Somerset County Sportsmen's League wish to go on record as being totally opposed to any form of Allegheny Mountain bypass on the Pennsylvania Turnpike.

A bypass would be a eternal monument to environmental and aesthetic disaster. Generations to come would be amazed at the callousness of any organization responsible for such environmental irresponsibility.

The financial numbers presented at the meeting in Somerset, January 16, 2020 are questionable. We would have to see numbers from other institutions, NOT CONNECTED with the Pennsylvania Turnpike, for the identical project to be convinced of their accuracy.

We understand the needs of the Turnpike and are open to a new tunnel project. We feel that the environmental and aesthetic impacts would be far less by drilling a new tunnel.

Please mail or fax this form to:

L.R. Kimball
Attn: Tammy Sherwin
615 West Highland Avenue
Ebensburg, PA 15131

Fax: 814-472-7712

Sincerely
Richard Berkley
President - Somerset
County Sportsmen's League

Richard L. Berkley
904 Stewart St.
Berlin, PA 15530

All responses must be received by February 6, 2020

Somerset County Sportsmen's League February 5, 2020
Response to issues identified

Opposed to any form of a bypass for environmental and aesthetic reasons: The project team has evaluated many alternatives over the course of the project. There were no Project alternatives that completely avoided environmental impacts, met all Project purpose and needs, and provided for reasonable costs. Every alternative studied includes areas of cut. The tunnel alternatives consist of a noticeably shorter length of tunnel as compared to the existing Allegheny Tunnel. The intact ridge length will not be the same as today with any of the alternatives. With regard to environmental impacts, the Gray Cut has lower wetland impacts compared to the other alternatives and does not impact the travel corridor of federal and state threatened and endangered bats that all of the northern alternatives impact. One of the reasons the Gray Cut is proposed to move forward is the proximity to the existing Turnpike utilizing previously disturbed area and the edge habitat created by the existing turnpike thus reducing the amount of interior forest impact as much as possible. Each tunnel alternative consists of cut and fill along with a shorter length of tunnel (compared to the existing Allegheny Tunnel). Each of the tunnel alternatives are located within more of the interior forest, further away from the existing Turnpike. While each alternative contains a tunnel that keeps a smaller length of contiguous forest intact (than the existing tunnel) it is creating additional edge habitat deeper within the forest than the Gray Cut alternative. The project team has proposed one dedicated overhead wildlife crossing and two structures over stream valleys to serve as underpasses to facilitate north south wildlife movement. As the project continues, the project team will coordinate with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Pennsylvania Game Commission to improve the design of wildlife crossings.

The existing Turnpike roadway crosses over both the Raystown Branch of the Juniata River and the Unnamed Tributary to the Stonycreek River (including multiple tributaries of each), as well as several wetland systems. For example, the Turnpike currently uses deicing agent on the roadway that crosses the above noted aquatic resources. All alternatives (cut and tunnel) will cross these same resources and require the use of deicing material in the winter. However, the alternatives developed for the study will utilize new stormwater systems that will collect runoff from large portions of the roadway directing it into stormwater facilities that will be required to meet MS4 provisions, providing greater protection than currently exists. Also, water encountered from excavation will be captured and treated as necessary prior to release to surface water systems. A thin section analysis on limited borings confirmed the presence of pyrite. Most of the pyrite occurs as microscopic grains, some of which is framboidal. It should be noted the pyrite evaluated via Scanning Electron Microscope (SEM) does not originate from hydrothermal solutions as secondary depositions as was the case in the Sky-Top Investigation near State College regarding the I-99 corridor. Appropriate studies will be completed as the project moves forward into final design to identify acidic problematic area such that design can minimize or eliminate the risk.

The project team will continue coordination with the environmental agencies throughout the design and construction of the project. Additionally, the Turnpike Commission is responsible to follow state and federal environmental regulations necessary to obtain permits prior to construction including 25 PA Code Chapter 105, Section 401 and 404 of the Clean Water Act, Section 7 of the Endangered Species act and the National Historic Preservation Act to mention a few.

It is the PTC's intent to revegetate as much disturbance as is feasible and possible. The steeper area of cut will be left as exposed rock. There is a parallel ridge 4,000 ft to the east of the Allegheny Ridge in the location of the project. The eastern ridge in the area of the cut is approximately the same elevation as the Allegheny Ridge at the location of the cut. This eastern ridge will limit the view from the east to the limits of this project. The impacts to the view of the ridge line from the west will be minimized by the parallel eastern ridge.

There are ten natural gaps in the Allegheny Ridge within a 20-mile radius of the project. The average depth of the natural gaps is approximately 265 ft and have an average top width of 3,200 ft. The gap created by the cut

will have a slightly smaller depth compared to other existing gaps in the ridge with a substantially narrower top width.

Financial numbers presented at the meeting are questionable: The Turnpike strives to be a good steward of the environment, they also work to be financially responsible to the facility users and the State. The Gray Cut Alternative is the most cost-effective alternative.

Construction cost estimates have substantially increased over the duration of this project. RSMeans Construction Cost Index provides ways to review historical trends with construction costs and can be utilized to assist with developing trend lines to estimate future construction cost increases. The RSMeans Index starts with a base year in January 1993 has a value of 100. At the time the first construction cost estimates were developed for the Allegheny Tunnel Project, in July of 1997, the index was 112.8. The last updated index was in July 2019 and had a value of 239.1. Averaging the annual increases between 1997 to 2019 yields an average annual increase of 3.31%. Using the average construction cost increase over the last 22 years, the projected cost index for the anticipated bid year would be 320.5. Based on a comparison of the cost index at the start of the project of 112.8 compared to the projected index of 320.5 at the proposed time the project would be bid, it would be expected to see costs increase by a factor in the general range of 250% to 310%. However, the best method of estimating costs is to compare unit costs for recent similar projects.

The first construction cost estimates published in 1997 were based on unit cost of major items at that time with a small factor for escalation of costs. As the project progressed the unit cost of items were updated based on more current information. One of the major updates occurred after US 219 Somerset to Meyersdale was bid, unit costs from this project were used to update earthwork, pavement and bridge unit costs. Additionally, the bid date for this Turnpike Project was extended well beyond the originally anticipated bid date which caused a larger escalation factor to account for inflation of construction cost.

The original cost estimates for the tunnel options were based on constructed costs of older tunnels in the United States with adjustments to account for cost increases due to time and other factors and were also based on construction techniques from other locations including Europe. The tunnel construction cost was updated later in the project by comparing the proposed tunnel to the Caldecott Tunnel constructed near Oakland, California, this project was bid in 2009 and included the addition of one new tube 50 ft wide and 32 ft high. The Caldecott Tunnel is of similar dimension to the proposed tunnels and used construction techniques that were considered for both tubes required for the Allegheny Tunnel. Based on the Caldecott Tunnel costs for items specific to the tunnel construction excluding pavement and barrier in the tunnel, an overall cost of \$115.8 million was calculated for the construction of the Caldecott Tunnel. The Caldecott Tunnel is 3,400 feet in length which yields a \$34,058 cost per linear foot of the tunnel. The Caldecott Tunnel costs were adjusted based on the RSMeans Catalog city cost index (a regional factor used to adjust cost in different locations) for Oakland, CA. (116.2) and Pittsburgh, PA. (99.6). The Costs in Pittsburgh are 86% of the costs in Oakland. A 25% increase to these costs was applied to account for unidentified work. This results in an Allegheny Tunnel Linear Foot Adjusted Cost of \$36,500 per linear foot of tunnel. To account for inflation of construction cost (an annual increase in cost since 2009 to time of the estimate yielded) a Linear Foot Adjusted cost of \$42,778 was applied per linear foot of tunnel for the updated cost used in 2017.

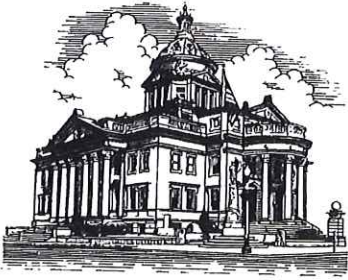
Open to a new tunnel project due to less environmental and aesthetic impacts: Please see the first response above.

SOMERSET COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

300 North Center Avenue, Suite 500 • Somerset, PA 15501

(814) 445-1400 • (814) 445-7991 Fax

www.co.somerset.pa.us



Gerald Walker, Chair
Colleen R. Dawson, Vice Chair
Pamela A. Tokar-Ickes, Secretary

February 3, 2020

L.R. Kimball
Attn: Tammy Sherwin
615 West Highland Avenue
Ebensburg, PA 15931



Gentlemen:

The Somerset County Commissioners stand in solidarity with and in full support of the stance of our constituents in opposition to the Pennsylvania Turnpike - Allegheny Tunnel Transportation Improvement Project. According to the PTC website, "The Gray Cut Alternative has been selected as the Project Preferred Alternative by the Commission and it's consultant, L.R. Kimball, as it best balances the environmental, engineering, operational, cost, and safety considerations that are components of this Project." We respectfully disagree with the findings of the Commission.

In our opinion, the proposed cut will have a devastating impact on the environment of both Somerset and Bedford Counties. Groundwater loss will impact the wetland and water sources of the region. Stormwater runoff, and the addition of roadway materials, will impact streams, rivers and public water sources.

High on our priority, as elected officials, is the safety of our residents and that of the public traveling through our area. The weather on the top of the Allegheny Ridge is unique. No one understands the patterns better than the local residents. Many tell of the fog line just above the entrance to the tunnel and of the unpredictability of snow and ice. The addition of the bridge contributes adversely to the icing concerns. We have another ridge in our county, the Laurel Ridge, on top of which was constructed a bypass for the Laurel Hill Tunnel. The bypass area is a safety concern for all who travel the turnpike on a regular basis. The conditions at the top of the ridge are, quite often, treacherous, while the condition of the roadway just a few hundred feet lower is acceptable.

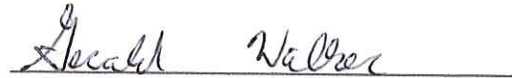
Perhaps the most significant argument in opposition to the cut is that of history, beauty and quality of life. Many of our ancestors crossed the Allegheny Mountain and settled in the beauty of Somerset County. This mountain ridge is a part of our heritage. We have a responsibility to our children and grandchildren to preserve this beauty of nature at its finest. The ridge serves as the Continental Divide in Pennsylvania, with waters from the eastern side draining into the Atlantic Ocean and waters from the western side draining into the Gulf of Mexico. The flora and fauna of the ridge is unique. What impact does this cut have on it, not just directly, but indirectly. The wildlife is abundant. Many species use the ridge as a travel corridor. In addition, many local hunters, hikers, youth groups and historians walk this ridge. This ridge is a mountain. You can't "make" a mountain, and it is our responsibility to preserve it.

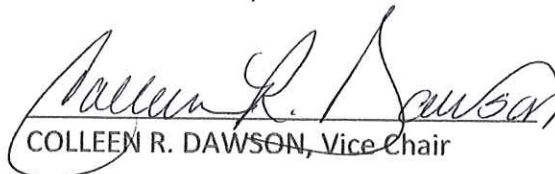
This Board of Commissioners will remain opposed to any cut of the Allegheny Mountain for transportation purposes, just as those Boards before us.

In closing, we would ask that you hold a public forum where you can hear and address our constituents. We will gladly serve as facilitators for this and look forward to your anticipated cooperation.

Sincerely yours,

SOMERSET COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS


GERALD WALKER, Chair


COLLEEN R. DAWSON, Vice Chair


PAMELA A. TOKAR-ICKES, Secretary

SCBC/ska

pc: Pennsylvania Turnpike Commission

Somerset County Commissioners Letter February 3, 2020
Responses to issues identified

The proposed cut will have a devastating impact on the environment: The project team has evaluated many alternatives over the course of the project. There were no Project alternatives that completely avoided environmental impacts, met all Project purpose and needs, and provided for reasonable costs. Every alternative studied includes areas of cut. The tunnel alternatives consist of a noticeably shorter length of tunnel as compared to the existing Allegheny Tunnel. The intact ridge length will not be the same as today with any of the alternatives. With regard to environmental impacts, the Gray Cut has lower aquatic resource impacts compared to the other alternatives and does not impact the travel corridor of federal and state threatened and endangered bats that all of the northern alternatives impact. One of the reasons the Gray Cut is proposed to move forward is the proximity to the existing Turnpike utilizing the edge habitat created by the existing turnpike and thus reducing the amount of interior forest impact as much as possible. Each tunnel alternative consists of cut and fill along with a shorter length of tunnel (compared to the existing Allegheny Tunnel). Each of the tunnel alternatives are located within more of the interior forest, further away from the existing Turnpike. While each alternative contains a tunnel that keeps a smaller length of contiguous forest intact (than the existing tunnel) it is creating additional edge habitat deeper within the forest than the Gray Cut alternative. The project team has proposed one dedicated overhead wildlife crossing and two structures over stream valleys to serve as underpasses to facilitate north south wildlife movement. As the project continues, the project team will coordinate with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Pennsylvania Game Commission to improve the design of the wildlife crossings.

The existing Turnpike roadway crosses over both the Raystown Branch of the Juniata River and the Unnamed Tributary to the Stonycreek River (including multiple tributaries of each), as well as several wetland systems. For example, the Turnpike currently uses deicing agent on the roadway that crosses the above noted aquatic resources. All alternatives (cut and tunnel) will cross these same resources and require the use of deicing material in the winter. However, the alternatives developed for the study will utilize new stormwater systems that will collect runoff from large portions of the roadway directing it into stormwater facilities that will be required to meet MS4 provisions, providing greater protection than currently exists. Also, water encountered from excavation will be captured and treated as necessary prior to release to surface water systems. A thin section analysis on limited borings confirmed the presence of pyrite. Most of the pyrite occurs as microscopic grains, some of which is framboidal. It should be noted the pyrite evaluated via Scanning Electron Microscope (SEM) does not originate from hydrothermal solutions as secondary depositions as was the case in the Sky-Top Investigation near State College regarding the I-99 corridor. Appropriate studies will be completed as the project moves forward into final design to identify acidic problematic area such that design can minimize or eliminate the risk.

The project team will continue coordination with the environmental agencies throughout the design and construction of the project. Additionally, the Turnpike Commission is responsible to follow state and federal environmental regulations necessary to obtain permits prior to construction including PA Code Chapter 105, Section 401 and 404 of the Clean Water Act, Section 7 of the Endangered Species act and the National Historic Preservation Act to mention a few.

Safety of our residents and public traveling through the area: While tunnels are safe, an open cut has additional safety advantages:

- The cut alternative has a shoulder that provides multiple benefits:
 - a recovery area exists if a driver errantly departs from a lane,
 - should a vehicle become disabled the shoulder provides an area of refuge
 - drivers have additional space if they are adjacent to a distracted driver
- Tunnels require periodic maintenance including:

- removal of snow buildup in the tunnel that requires traffic to be stopped (potential for rear end collision)
- equipment maintenance like replacing lights that may require bidirectional traffic in one tube (potential of head on collision)
- Standard speed reduction required for tunnels, 70 MPH to 55 MPH (potential for rear end collision).

The tunnel options do provide a short duration where the driver is not exposed to adverse weather conditions, 31 seconds for the Gray Tunnel for example, but the previously discussed issues have a larger impact on driver safety. The overall crash rate for the Turnpike while approaching or departing the Allegheny Tunnels is more than two times greater than the statewide crash rate for similar interstate segments in PA. It was noted the safety advantage that tunnels gain by offering motorists protection from adverse weather is offset by the increased number of accidents that are unique to a tunnel and/or its operation.

Weather: The elevation difference between the existing Turnpike roadway and the proposed gray cut is approximately 224 feet. It is expected that either option (Rehabilitation/new tunnel or Gray Cut alternative) will experience very similar weather conditions for the area. Based on the Gray Tunnel length (3,045') and increased length of the Gray Tunnel alternative (335') as compared to the Gray Cut, drivers will only experience 31 seconds less of adverse weather in a tunnel. The safety advantage that tunnels gain by offering motorists protection from adverse weather is offset by the increased number of accidents that are unique to a tunnel and/or its operation. The PTC is continually updating its systems to include the most modern facilities for sensing weather conditions across the Turnpike. This would include a variety of methods for sensing weather conditions and changing operations in response, such as the use of changeable message signs and traveler advisory radio in the vicinity of the Allegheny Mountains. Weather related accidents are not completely avoidable, but today's technologies allow for monitoring of weather and road conditions and alerting travelers to those conditions in real time. Traditional methods continue to be used to mitigate for severe weather conditions as they occur. For snow and freezing roadway conditions, the PTC regularly applies deicing and antiskid materials, as well as plowing. These conditions including fog can also be mitigated in part by warning systems or the posting of mandatory lower speeds.

Responsibility to preserve the mountain: It is the PTC's intent to revegetate as much disturbance as is feasible and possible. The steeper area of cut will be left as exposed rock. There is a parallel ridge 4,000 ft to the east of the Allegheny Ridge in the location of the project. The eastern ridge in the area of the cut is approximately the same elevation as the Allegheny Ridge at the location of the cut. This eastern ridge will limit the view from the east to the limits of this project. The impacts to the view of the ridge line from the west will be minimized by the parallel eastern ridge.

There are ten natural gaps in the Allegheny Ridge within a 20-mile radius of the project. The average depth of the natural gaps is approximately 265 ft and have an average top width of 3,200 ft. The gap created by the cut will have a slightly smaller depth compared to other existing gaps in the ridge with a substantially narrower top width.

Also, a majority of the land within the project is private property and the owner can choose to clear cut or alter the land as they see fit at any time. The PTC will make every attempt to produce an aesthetically pleasing project.

Public forum requested: The project has had multiple public plans displays where the project team has solicited public comment. The Allegheny Tunnel Transportation Improvement Project is fully funded by Turnpike funds with no federal funds involved. The only federal action of the project is the requirement of a Clean Water Act Section 404 / 401 permit from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE). This action places the USACE

as the lead federal agency. The USACE will afford additional opportunity for public comment during the permit review process.

RECEIVED
FEB 10 2020
CDI - L. R. KIMBALL
EBENSBURG, PA

COMMENT FORM

Please Provide Your Comments or Suggestions:

The PA Turnpike Commission attempt to limit comment on this project is sickening. Insisting on a specific form and not allowing it to be submitted electronically is a wonderfully Orwellian method to control what is received. Like your execution of the turnpike interchange at Somerset, your plan for the Allegheny Tunnel suits you and no one else. It will prevent an uncrossable barrier for wild-life that will not be solved by a thirty foot wide bridge in over a mile of cut. The cut goes straight through a hunting club that was in existence prior to the turnpike. The Turnpike Commission apparently thinks as little about private property as it does about public comment. Everywhere else in the world countries are building tunnels to limit environmental damage and avoid taking private land. Not in PA where the Turnpike Commission believes in doing as little as possible for the public good. Re-do the tunnels. Stop designing solutions that destroy habitat and steal private land.

Jim Bouer

Please mail or fax this form to:

L.R. Kimball
Attn: Tammy Sherwin
615 West Highland Avenue
Ebensburg, PA 15931

Fax: 814-472-7712

All responses must be received by February 27, 2020

Messages » [Results](#) » Contact ID# 199091



jim bowers

Address from CRM:
Street1: 1765 GEIGER RD
Street2:
City: FRIEDENS
State: PA
Zip: 15541
Zip2:
Country:

General	Messages (2)	Outreach (0)	Services (0)	Events (0)
Boards (0)	Log (2)			

Home Address

1765 Geiger Road
Friedens, PA 15541-7603
PA13 Somerset County



Business Address

1765 GEIGER RD
FRIEDENS, PA 15541



Online Info

Email: jeb1958@gmail.com

Phone Numbers

Hm Phone: (181) 444-3972
(181) 444-3972



Household Members

None

Organization Contacts

None

Attachments

Affiliations

CORRESPONDENCE - Correspondence Tracking Contact

Discussion (0)

Email Viewer

Message	Details	Attachments	Headers
Source			

[HTML](#)

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Cc:
Subject: Contact Form

The PA Turnpike Commissions plan to bulldoze part of the Allegheny Front is a terrible idea. Their method of public comment is designed to limit comment, not invite it. You must use their form, it can't be electronically submitted, and must be mailed or faxed. The PA Turnpike Commission has long ago outlived it's usefulness. I'm not in favor of the state taking private land to make messes. The hunting club that owns the property impacted by the Allegheny Tunnel project was in existence prior to the turnpike. The Turnpike Commission wants to take over a mile of land, replace it with a thirty foot wide animal bridge and call it a day. Let's replace the Turnpike Commission instead.

Close

James Bowers Comment Form February 10, 2020
Responses to issues identified

PTC attempt to limit comment: The PTC accepts multiple forms of comment including mail, fax, website, and emailing. The comment form provided did not specifically mention email submissions. It was not the PTC's intent to limit comment and all forms of comment are accepted.

Un-crossable barrier for wildlife that will not be solved by a 30-foot wide bridge: The project team has proposed one dedicated overhead wildlife crossing 100 feet wide and 200 feet long and two large bridges over stream valleys to serve as underpasses to facilitate north south wildlife movement. The wildlife crossing is located south of the existing Allegheny Tunnel. This location was chosen as it provides a crossing point for wildlife that is in line with the existing section of contiguous forest area that is found over the Allegheny Tunnel. This crossing, in conjunction with the structures over the Unnamed Tributary to Stonycreek River and the Raystown Branch of Juniata River, are intended to provide multiple locations along the new section of highway that will allow for the safe movement of wildlife. As the project continues, the project team will coordinate with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Pennsylvania Game Commission to improve the design of wildlife crossings.

The cut goes straight through a hunting club that was in existence prior to the Turnpike: The Project will impact several private property owners and it is understood the Mountain Field and Stream Club owns a large amount of property affected by the Project. The PTC is required to follow their acquisition process and provide fair compensation for impacts to property. The design of the Gray Cut alternative includes creating an access road to connect the MFSC property and additional discussions will be held during the right of way acquisition process.

The Turnpike Commission thinks little about private property: The Project will impact private property owners. The PTC and its designers make every attempt to minimize right away takes as much as possible. However, if unavoidable, the PTC is required to follow their acquisition process and provide fair compensation for impacts to property. Once the project progresses into final design, right of way acquisition negotiations will occur with property owners. The PTC will notify and meet with each affected property owner.

The Turnpike Commission thinks little about public comment: The PTC will take into account public comment. All comments received as a result of the public involvement process are documented in the Environmental Document. The environmental process requires the PTC to avoid, minimize and mitigate environmental impacts to natural, cultural and social resources. Several permits are required to be obtained prior to construction and public comment is incorporated into the decision to issue or deny a permit.

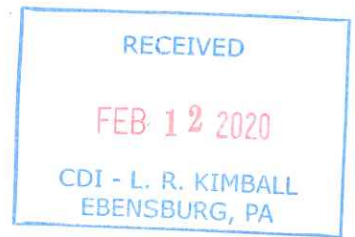
Re-do the tunnels: A conceptual design and cost estimate was developed by Paul C. Rizzo Associates, Inc. for widening both the east bound and west bound tunnels. An evaluation of the available geologic and geotechnical information was presented and the suitability of various types of excavation equipment was evaluated.

Based on the existing information and time constraints imposed on the construction, widening of the existing Allegheny Tunnel was determined not practical for the following reasons:

- Disturbance to the South Penn Railroad Tunnel, directly or indirectly due to construction activities, has the potential to affect the federally endangered Indiana bat, and other bat species that utilize this known hibernaculum.
- Potential failure to provide adequate ventilation during construction activities will reduce traffic visibility due to dust.

- The cost of widening the existing Allegheny Tunnel and associated roadway improvements is nearly \$500 million.
- The progress of the project is affected by maintenance of traffic, low production rates of excavation and seasonal restrictions, resulting in an unacceptable construction duration of up to twenty (20) years.
- Traffic cannot be in a tunnel during the installation or disassembly of the tunnel shield, resulting in bi-directional traffic in the one tunnel that is not being worked on. The sequential closings of the tunnels, or reduction to one lane of traffic for a day or two, occurs for a total of two hundred thirteen (213) intermittent days. Numerous traffic stoppages will also be associated with blasting. The traffic control measures required with the widening of the existing tunnels are not practical due to the interruption of traffic flow, increased potential of accidents and substantial congestion generated by these operations.
- The contractor will have reasonable and appropriate safety measures in place; however, due to the nature of the construction activities and confined working space adjacent to traffic, there is a substantially increased risk of a major incident occurring during the widening of the existing tunnels.

Additionally, multiple hybrid variations of using one or both of the existing tubes were evaluated. Several of the variations included performing major rehabilitation on the existing tubes for use of westbound traffic, build a new 3-lane tube for eastbound traffic and address the substandard curve to the east of the existing tunnel, or rehabilitating just the southern 2-lane tube, abandon the northern tube, build an additional 2-lane and a 3-lane tube and flatten the substandard curve. Both variations have two issues. The first is the 4-lane westbound traffic would be required to diverge east of the new tunnels and then merge west of the tunnels, while this is possible it creates a less than desirable traffic pattern. Second and more critical issue is that both variations require the revising of the existing curve east of the tunnel to meet the minimum curve radius. The required minimum radius and maintaining the elevation of the existing tunnel would have a major impact to the area of geotechnical remediation associated with the Gray Cut Alternative. The impacted area of the ancient landslide would be substantially larger for the alternatives using the existing tube(s) than compared to the Gray Cut Alternative. This would result in increased forest removal and potentially additional aquatic resource impacts.



Public Plans Display - January 16, 2020

COMMENT FORM

Please Provide Your Comments or Suggestions: *Hello Tammy*

After the meeting I really didn't have any comments. I understand the need for the project.

But recently I talked to my TWP. SUP. In his meeting he was shown a map with my ground on it. They plan on using my ground to put the fill on that comes out of the Cut.

Can I have a meeting with someone who can explain how is this work. Do they take my ground? Or do they just pay me to place it there? How much ground do they need ect.?

Thank You Very Much !!

Mark D. Creamer

#814-233-5305

*P.O. BOX 288
Berlin, PA.
15530-0288*

Please mail or fax this form to:

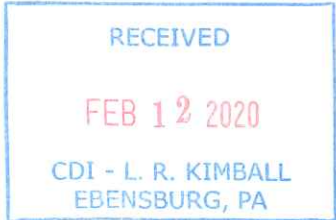
L.R. Kimball
Attn: Tammy Sherwin
615 West Highland Avenue
Ebensburg, PA 15931

Fax: 814-472-7712

All responses must be received by February 27, 2020

Mark Creamer Comment Form February 12, 2020
Response to issues identified

Requested a meeting to discuss the placement of fill on his property: The PTC contacted Mr. Creamer on February 14, 2020 via phone to discuss the project.



Public Plans Display – January 16, 2020

COMMENT FORM

Please Provide Your Comments or Suggestions:

I am adamantly opposed to any of the cut options. The grey cut is particularly bad as it is longer than the others and will increase the dangerous curve on the eastern side. The cuts will have a much more detrimental effect on the environment than any of the tunnel options.

Thank you
John W. Harvey
167 Oak Hill Drive
Friedens, PA 15541

Please mail or fax this form to:

L.R. Kimball
Attn: Tammy Sherwin
615 West Highland Avenue
Ebensburg, PA 15931

Fax: 814-472-7712

All responses must be received by February 27, 2020

John Harvey Comment Form February 12, 2020
Responses to issues identified

Opposed to a cut. Cuts will have more detrimental effects on environment than tunnels: The project team has evaluated many alternatives over the course of the project. There were no Project alternatives that completely avoided environmental impacts, met all Project purpose and needs, and provided for reasonable costs. Every alternative studied includes areas of cut. The tunnel alternatives consist of a noticeably shorter length of tunnel as compared to the existing Allegheny Tunnel. The intact ridge length will not be the same as today with any of the alternatives. With regard to environmental impacts, the Gray Cut has lower wetland impacts compared to the other alternatives and does not impact the travel corridor of federal and state threatened and endangered bats that all of the northern alternatives impact. One of the reasons the Gray Cut is proposed to move forward is the proximity to the existing Turnpike utilizing previously disturbed area and the edge habitat created by the existing turnpike and thus reducing the amount of interior forest impact as much as possible. Each tunnel alternative consists of cut and fill along with a shorter length of tunnel (compared to the existing Allegheny Tunnel). Each of the tunnel alternatives are located within more of the interior forest, further away from the existing Turnpike. While each alternative contains a tunnel that keeps a smaller length of contiguous forest intact (than the existing tunnel) it is creating additional edge habitat deeper within the forest than the Gray Cut alternative. The project team has proposed one dedicated overhead wildlife crossing and two structures over stream valleys to serve as underpasses to facilitate north south wildlife movement. As the project continues, the project team will coordinate with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Pennsylvania Game Commission to improve the design of the wildlife crossings.

The existing Turnpike roadway crosses over both the Raystown Branch of the Juniata River and the Unnamed Tributary to the Stonycreek River (including multiple tributaries of each), as well as several wetland systems. For example, the Turnpike currently uses deicing agent on the roadway that crosses the above noted aquatic resources. All alternatives (cut and tunnel) will cross these same resources and require the use of deicing material in the winter. However, the alternatives developed for the study will utilize new stormwater systems that will collect runoff from large portions of the roadway directing it into stormwater facilities that will be required to meet MS4 provisions, providing greater protection than currently exists. Also, water encountered from excavation will be captured and treated as necessary prior to release to surface water systems. A thin section analysis on limited borings confirmed the presence of pyrite. Most of the pyrite occurs as microscopic grains, some of which is framboidal. It should be noted the pyrite evaluated via Scanning Electron Microscope (SEM) does not originate from hydrothermal solutions as secondary depositions as was the case in the Sky-Top Investigation near State College regarding the I-99 corridor. Appropriate studies will be completed as the project moves forward into final design to identify acidic problematic area such that design can minimize or eliminate the risk.

The project team will continue coordination with the environmental agencies throughout the design and construction of the project. Additionally, the Turnpike Commission is responsible to follow state and federal environmental regulations necessary to obtain permits prior to construction including PA Code Chapter 105, Section 401 and 404 of the Clean Water Act, Section 7 of the Endangered Species act and the National Historic Preservation Act to mention a few.

Increase the dangerous curve on the east side: The Gray Cut alternative incorporates horizontal curves that meet or exceed the minimum radius of 1,818.9 ft, the current horizontal curve east of the existing tunnel has a radius of only 954.9 ft which is approximately half of the allowable minimum radius as defined by the American Association of State Highway Transportation Officials (AASHTO).



Somerset County Chamber of Commerce

601 North Center Avenue

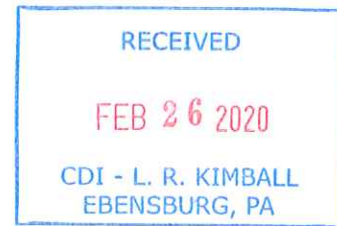
Somerset, PA 15501

814.445.6431 FAX 814.443.4313

info@somersetcountychamber.com

February 21, 2020

LR Kimball
Attn: Tammy Sherwin
615 West Highland Avenue
Ebensburg, PA. 15931



To whom it may concern,

The Somerset County Chamber of Commerce supports the stance of the Somerset County Commissioners in opposition to the PA Turnpike – Allegheny Tunnel Transportation Improvement Project. The identified Gray Cut Alternative; selected by the commission and L.R. Kimball will create a definitive hardship on our county in many ways that would have a lasting devastating impact on our environment in both Somerset and Bedford Counties. The chamber supports the interests of over 700 businesses and organizations and we feel confident that they all oppose this project for its negative impact on our environment and the lives of their employees and families.

Somerset County, part of the beautiful Laurel Highlands region is well known as an outdoor recreation venue that draws millions of visitors a year to our mountains, streams and outdoor recreation destinations. This project would have a severe long-term financial impact on our local hospitality/tourism sector and other support businesses. The Allegheny Tunnel area is the postcard entrance into Somerset County and the beauty of the pristine mountains and forests are all a part of what attracts visitors to the county. To spoil that view is just impossible to comprehend. Plus, the ridge serves as the Continental Divide, which separates two distinct water basins, flowing to the Gulf of Mexico and the Chesapeake Bay.

We, again, support the wishes of the County Commissioners to hold a public forum so you can hear from our residents and others who would be impacted from this project and would be happy to assist the commissioners in promoting the forum.

We strongly oppose any cut to the Allegheny Mountains, as it will have a devastating impact on our region and one that we can never get back.

Respectfully,

Ron Aldom

Executive Director

Somerset County Chamber of Commerce

Somerset County Chamber of Commerce February 21, 2020
Response to issues identified

Opposed to Gray Cut Alternative for environmental and aesthetic reasons: The project team has evaluated many alternatives over the course of the project. There were no Project alternatives that completely avoided environmental impacts, met all Project purpose and needs, and provided for reasonable costs. Every alternative studied includes areas of cut. The tunnel alternatives consist of a noticeably shorter length of tunnel as compared to the existing Allegheny Tunnel. The intact ridge length will not be the same as today with any of the alternatives. With regard to environmental impacts, the Gray Cut has lower wetland impacts compared to the other alternatives and does not impact the travel corridor of federal and state threatened and endangered bats that all of the northern alternatives impact. One of the reasons the Gray Cut is proposed to move forward is the proximity to the existing Turnpike utilizing previously disturbed area and the edge habitat created by the existing turnpike thus reducing the amount of interior forest impact as much as possible. Each tunnel alternative consists of cut and fill along with a shorter length of tunnel (compared to the existing Allegheny Tunnel). Each of the tunnel alternatives are located within more of the interior forest, further away from the existing Turnpike. While each alternative contains a tunnel that keeps a smaller length of contiguous forest intact (than the existing tunnel) it is creating additional edge habitat deeper within the forest than the Gray Cut alternative. The project team has proposed one overhead and two structures over stream valleys to facilitate north south wildlife movement. As the project continues, the project team will coordinate with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Pennsylvania Game Commission to improve the design of the wildlife crossings.

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It is the PTC's intent to revegetate as much disturbance as is feasible and possible. The steeper area of cut will be left as exposed rock. There is a parallel ridge 4,000 ft to the east of the Allegheny Ridge in the location of the project. The eastern ridge in the area of the cut is approximately the same elevation as the Allegheny Ridge at the location of the cut. This eastern ridge will limit the view from the east to the limits of this project. The impacts to the view of the ridge line from the west will be minimized by the parallel eastern ridge.

There are ten natural gaps in the Allegheny Ridge within a 20-mile radius of the project. The average depth of the natural gaps is approximately 265 ft and have an average top width of 3,200 ft. The gap created by the cut

will have a slightly smaller depth compared to other existing gaps in the ridge with a substantially narrower top width.

Public forum requested: The project has had multiple public plans displays where the project team has solicited public comment. The Allegheny Tunnel Transportation Improvement Project is fully funded by Turnpike funds with no federal funds involved. The only federal action of the project is the requirement of a Clean Water Act Section 404 / 401 permit from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE). This action places the USACE as the lead federal agency. The USACE will afford additional opportunity for public comment during the permit review process.

LR Kimball

ATTN: Tammy Sherwin

Feb. 21, 2020

Building a KILLER BYPASS

After attending Allegheny tunnel Improvement project meeting January 16, 2020

Sounds like LR Kimball has submit plans to Pa Turnpike Commission for a

Gray bypass (cut) south of exciting tunnels. I believe a Bypass would

Become a killer for many reasons

1) Loss of life

A PTC study shows no significant difference in safety between tunnels and a by pass

(not sure if this takes in Somerset county weather) with treacherous weather a cut

Would be affected by high winds, white outs, and freezing rain. A dense fog and

Freezing ice line forms above 2300'. The design calls for a dangerous 2000' long

Bridge built on a 7% downhill grade and on a sweeping curve. East morning sun

Would bring out black ice and create a skating rink.

2) Flooding

By removing hundreds of acres of forest land (nature natural sponge) and replacing

it with 3.8 miles of blacktop, run off from 3000' elevation to 1400' would flood

Raystown Branch & New Baltimore with every hard rain.

3) No access across top of mountain except for one small game crossing of 600'

This could hurt wildlife as predators would close in on this area

4) Acid mine run off (could we see another I-99 disaster)

Removing 1.8 million cubic yard of overburden this would require a several hundred

acre dump site. Once unearthed and expose to air & rain it would create a toxic run off

That would affect Lake Stonycreek & Stonycreek River

5) Hazardous water

Under mountain is a pocket of high iron water over 100 ppm, we still see effects of 50 year old

Bore holes that are artesian wells leaking out orange water. Could a cut bring more problems like this?

RECEIVED

FEB 21 2020

CDI - L. R. KIMBALL
EBENSBURG, PA

6) Pollute a public drinking supply

Berlin's drinking water could become contaminated from hazardous spills, chemicals & Salt runoff leaching into its water sources,

7) Destroying an ego system, beauty & balance of a forested mountain

8) Cost

I don't believe cost estimates are accurate in 2000 cut cost were 91 million & Tunnel was 140 million in 2014 cut was 300 to 694 today a cut is 332 tunnel 702 million. Why is cost so different? TPC says tunnels need replace because of age built in 1940 & 1965 comparing to squirrel hill tunnel built in 1953 its being used every day & lot more traffic, no talk of tearing them out. TPC has created this problem by not taking care of them the past 25 years. TCP has said tunnels ability to protect motorist in adverse weather is not a sufficient reason to choose a tunnel option. What cost does TPC put on loss of Human life, flooding, water contamination, Habit changes, & ego system, seems like 400 million. Once a cut is built there no going back Damage is done - Forever

Other option

Make Rt 219 south a TP extension, could put exits onto 219 no need for toll booths with EZ pass System interchange would remain in Somerset this would relieve congestion at tunnels & also in Breezewood, traveling Rt 30 it can take 20 minutes to go 1 mile with trucks blocking 3 lanes & missing light cycles Tunnels could be refurbish and still are money ahead for decades of Maintenance

John Fox

John & Kathy Fox
426 Big Rock Road
Berlin PA 15530

John Fox Comment Article February 21, 2020
Responses to issues identified

Loss of life – safety and weather: While tunnels are safe, an open cut has additional safety advantages:

- The cut alternative has a full width shoulder that provides multiple benefits:
 - a recovery area exists if a driver errantly departs from a lane,
 - should a vehicle become disabled the shoulder provides an area of refuge
 - drivers have additional space if they are adjacent to a distracted driver
- Tunnels require periodic maintenance including:
 - removal of snow buildup in the tunnel that requires traffic to be stopped (potential for rear end collision)
 - equipment maintenance like replacing lights that may require bidirectional traffic in one tube (potential of head on collision)
- Standard speed reduction required for tunnels, 70 MPH to 55 MPH (potential for rear end collision).

The tunnel options do provide a short duration where the driver is not exposed to adverse weather conditions, 31 seconds for the Gray Tunnel for example, but the previously discussed issues have a larger impact on driver safety. The overall crash rate for the Turnpike while approaching or departing the Allegheny Tunnels is more than two times greater than the statewide crash rate for similar interstate segments in PA. It was noted the safety advantage that tunnels gain by offering motorists protection from adverse weather is offset by the increased number of accidents that are unique to a tunnel and/or its operation.

The elevation difference between the existing Turnpike roadway and the proposed gray cut is approximately 224 feet. It is expected that either option (Rehabilitation/new tunnel or Gray Cut alternative) will experience very similar weather conditions for the area. Based on the Gray Tunnel length (3,045') and increased length of the Gray Tunnel alternative (335') as compared to the Gray Cut, drivers will only experience 31 seconds less of adverse weather in a tunnel. The safety advantage that tunnels gain by offering motorists protection from adverse weather is offset by the increased number of accidents that are unique to a tunnel and/or its operation. The PTC is continually updating its systems to include the most modern facilities for sensing weather conditions across the Turnpike. This would include a variety of methods for sensing weather conditions and changing operations in response, such as the use of changeable message signs and traveler advisory radio in the vicinity of the Allegheny Mountains. Weather related accidents are not completely avoidable, but today's technologies allow for monitoring of weather and road conditions and alerting travelers to those conditions in real time. Traditional methods continue to be used to mitigate for severe weather conditions as they occur. For snow and freezing roadway conditions, the PTC regularly applies deicing and antiskid materials, as well as plowing. These conditions including fog can also be mitigated in part by warning systems or the posting of mandatory lower speeds.

Flooding: The alternatives developed for the study will utilize new stormwater systems that will collect runoff from large portions of the roadway directing it into stormwater facilities that will be required to meet MS4 provisions. As a part of the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit the PTC is required to complete a Post - Construction Stormwater Analysis that assures there will not be an adverse impact to downstream waters and property owners.

No access across mountain top for wildlife: The project team has proposed one dedicated overhead wildlife crossing 100 feet wide and 200 feet long and two large bridges over stream valleys to serve as underpasses to facilitate north south wildlife movement. The wildlife crossing is located south of the existing Allegheny Tunnel. This location was chosen as it provides a crossing point for wildlife that is in line with the existing section of contiguous forest area that is found over the Allegheny Tunnel. This crossing, in conjunction with the structures over the Unnamed Tributary to Stonycreek River and the Raystown Branch of Juniata River, are intended to provide locations along the new section of highway that will allow for the safe movement of wildlife. As the project continues, the

project team will coordinate with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Pennsylvania Game Commission to improve the design of the wildlife crossings.

Acid mine run off (could we see another I-99 disaster): Water encountered from excavation will be captured and treated as necessary prior to release to surface water systems. A thin section analysis on limited borings confirmed the presence of pyrite. Most of the pyrite occurs as microscopic grains, some of which is framboidal. It should be noted the pyrite evaluated via Scanning Electron Microscope (SEM) does not originate from hydrothermal solutions as secondary depositions as was the case in the Sky-Top Investigation near State College regarding the I-99 corridor. Appropriate studies will be completed as the project moves forward into final design to identify acidic problematic area such that design can minimize or eliminate the risk.

Hazardous water and pollute a public drinking supply: Water encountered from excavation will be captured and treated as necessary prior to release to surface water systems. Additional studies will be conducted during final design to identify areas of concern regarding groundwater. Two (2) preliminary analyses were conducted regarding potential project impacts to the Berlin Borough public water supply. The first was conducted by Casselberry and Associates in 2000. The report analyzed the Orange, Brown, Yellow and Red corridors. The Red Tunnel alternative was in close proximity to the location of Gray Corridor. As noted in the 2000 report, the major conclusions of C&A's study are as follows:

- The closest public water supply source to the Allegheny Mountain Tunnels is the Berlin Borough Well Field. The capture zone for this well field lies some two miles up-gradient of the project area. Therefore, none of the potential Turnpike improvement scenarios pose any threat of contamination or diminution to Berlin's water supply.
- The aquifer systems local to the area, affected by the Turnpike improvement options, have extremely small, mountain-slope, recharge areas and contain limited groundwater resources. Therefore, none of the improvement scenarios have the potential to impact a regional drinking water source. At this point and time, use of the aquifer systems located in close proximity to the existing and future-potential Turnpike corridors is limited to a low density of rural residential and agricultural groundwater supplies.
- A comprehensive groundwater supply study of Somerset County was completed to identify potential groundwater sources for municipal use. The closest potential well field to the Turnpike project study area lies on the Stoney Creek valley floor some 8000 feet west of the existing tunnels. This potential well field targets an aquifer unit that would not be disturbed by the proposed roadway improvements. Therefore, none of the roadway construction scenarios contemplated in this project pose a threat to aquifer systems that could be utilized in the future for the development of regional groundwater sources.
- The potential impacts of the proposed project will be limited to local-scale problems involving:
 - Interception of shallow groundwater systems that provide base flow to small perennial streams, wetlands and domestic water supply sources.
 - Groundwater and surface water contamination resulting from construction activities (siltation) and the eventual application of deicing compounds.

The second study was conducted in 2016 by L.R. Kimball to evaluate the Gray Corridor. The following areas were assessed:

- Well quantity
- Water quality

- Contamination of recharge area
- Infiltration of surface contaminants
- Impacts to well field aquifer

Contamination to the Borough water supplies is not likely; as ground and surface water flow directions do not traverse or migrate from the Project area to the wells or springs. In addition, the Borough wells are situated south of a wind gap between ridges that define the Allegheny Front. This “break” or gap in the ridge complex creates a topographic barrier, which will provide protection from potential acid contamination resulting from construction of a selected alternative. Water encountered from the excavation will be captured and treated as necessary prior to release to surface water systems. Appropriate studies will be completed as the project moves forward into final design to identify acidic problematic area such that design can minimize or eliminate the risk.

The thin section analysis confirmed that most of the pyrite occurs as microscopic grains, some of which is framboidal. The nature of the framboidal pyrite will deteriorate at a faster rate for large grains. The thin section work also produced images that confirm the rock type, sulfidic type and depositional characteristics.

The wells and Project area share geologic rock/units associated with the Mauch Chunk / Burgoon sequence. Based on previous well reports (Casselberry, 2000); capture zones associated with the wells and these geologic units are not within the study limits of the Gray Corridor. As for the immediate Allegheny Front, regional groundwater flow is in part controlled by the fracture network associated with the Raystown Branch of the Juniata River valley. Where flow is directed to the Raystown Branch of the Juniata River Valley (both surface and subsurface). A component of groundwater flow associated with this fracture system flows to the northeast in a similar flow direction of the river away from the Borough water supplies.

Topographically the springs lie southwest of the Project and reside in a different ridge complex than the Project. The springs are situated “up gradient” and are located 3.5 miles southwest of the Project area. In consideration of the proposed Project Corridors, existing site and geologic characteristics, contamination resultant of the Project to the Borough water supplies is not likely.

The 2016 report also notes the following recommendations should be considered as the project progresses to alleviate concerns and have a mitigation plan in place for unforeseen circumstances:

- The blasting plan to be used in construction must take into consideration the distance to the recharge area of the Berlin well field and springs. There are approximately 1.6 miles of separation distance between the Gray Corridor and the Berlin well field which provides some barrier/space between the wells and Project with regards to blasting and excavation. A full analysis of blasting impacts will be evaluated on the selected alternative as design progresses.
- Implementation of a monitoring program (prior to, during and after construction) to define if a groundwater relationship exists between the Berlin water supplies and selected alternative. This information will serve as a base line of water quality and quantity and provide a basis of comparison to evaluate if impacts have occurred to water resources resultant of construction activities.
- Development of a program that facilitates the exchange of technical information (between PTC and Borough) as it relates to the quality and quantity of the Berlin water supplies before, during and after construction.
- Development of a plan for implementation of an alternate water supply that could be timely executed should adverse unforeseen effects to the Berlin water supplies occur.

Destroying an eco-system: The project team has evaluated many alternatives over the course of the project. There were no Project alternatives that completely avoided environmental impacts, met all Project purpose and needs, and provided for reasonable costs. Every alternative studied includes areas of cut. The tunnel alternatives consist of a noticeably shorter length of tunnel as compared to the existing Allegheny Tunnel. The intact ridge length will not be the same as today with any of the alternatives. With regard to environmental impacts, the Gray Cut has lower wetland impacts compared to the other alternatives and does not impact the travel corridor of federal and state threatened and endangered bats that all of the northern alternatives impact. One of the reasons the Gray Cut is proposed to move forward is the proximity to the existing Turnpike utilizing previously disturbed area and the edge habitat created by the existing turnpike thus reducing the amount of interior forest impact as much as possible. Each tunnel alternative consists of cut and fill along with a shorter length of tunnel (compared to the existing Allegheny Tunnel). Each of the tunnel alternatives are located within more of the interior forest, further away from the existing Turnpike. While each alternative contains a tunnel that keeps a smaller length of contiguous forest intact (than the existing tunnel) it is creating additional edge habitat deeper within the forest than the Gray Cut alternative. The project team has proposed one overhead wildlife crossing and two structures over stream valleys to serve as underpasses to facilitate north south wildlife movement. As the project continues, the project team will coordinate with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Pennsylvania Game Commission to improve the design of the wildlife crossings.

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The project team will continue coordination with the environmental agencies throughout the design and construction of the project. Additionally, the Turnpike Commission is responsible to follow state and federal environmental regulations necessary to obtain permits prior to construction including PA Code Chapter 105, Section 401 and 404 of the Clean Water Act, Section 7 of the Endangered Species act and the National Historic Preservation Act to mention a few.

It is the PTC's intent to revegetate as much disturbance as is feasible and possible. The steeper area of cut will be left as exposed rock. There is a parallel ridge 4,000 ft to the east of the Allegheny Ridge in the location of the project. The eastern ridge in the area of the cut is approximately the same elevation as the Allegheny Ridge at the location of the cut. This eastern ridge will limit the view from the east to the limits of this project. The impacts to the view of the ridge line from the west will be minimized by the parallel eastern ridge.

There are ten natural gaps in the Allegheny Ridge within a 20-mile radius of the project. The average depth of the natural gaps is approximately 265 ft and have an average top width of 3,200 ft. The gap created by the cut will have a slightly smaller depth compared to other existing gaps in the ridge with a substantially narrower top width.

Cost: The Turnpike strives to be a good steward of the environment, they also work to be financially responsible to the facility users and the State. The Gray Cut Alternative is the most cost-effective alternative.

Construction cost estimates have substantially increased over the duration of this project. RSMMeans Construction Cost Index provides ways to review historical trends with construction costs and can be utilized to assist with developing trend lines to estimate future construction cost increases. The RSMMeans Index starts with a base year in January 1993 with a value of 100. At the time the first construction cost estimates were developed for the Allegheny Tunnel Project, in July of 1997, the index was 112.8. The last updated index was in July 2019 and had a value of

239.1. Averaging the annual increases between 1997 to 2019 yields an average annual increase of 3.31%. Using the average construction cost increase over the last 22 years, the projected cost index for the anticipated bid year would be 320.5. Based on a comparison of the cost index at the start of the project of 112.8 compared to the projected index of 320.5 at the proposed time the project would be bid, it would be expected to see costs increase by a factor in the general range of 250% to 310%. However, the best method of estimating costs is to compare unit costs for recent similar projects.

The first construction cost estimates published in 1997 were based on unit cost of major items at that time with a small factor for escalation of costs. As the project progressed the unit cost of items were updated based on more current information. One of the major updates occurred after US 219 Somerset to Meyersdale was bid, unit costs from this project were used to update earthwork, pavement and bridge unit costs. Additionally, the bid date was extended well beyond the originally anticipated bid date which caused a larger escalation factor to account for inflation of construction cost.

The original cost estimates for the tunnel options were based on constructed costs of older tunnels in the United States with adjustments to account for cost increases due to time and other factors and were also based on construction techniques from other locations including Europe. The tunnel construction cost was updated later in the project by comparing the proposed tunnel to the Caldecott Tunnel constructed near Oakland, California, this project was bid in 2009 and included the addition of one new tube 50 ft wide and 32 ft high. The Caldecott Tunnel is of similar dimension to the proposed tunnels and used construction techniques that were considered for both tubes required for the Allegheny Tunnel. Based on the Caldecott Tunnel costs for items specific to the tunnel construction excluding pavement and barrier in the tunnel, an overall cost of \$115.8 million was calculated for the construction of the Caldecott Tunnel. The Caldecott Tunnel is 3,400 feet in length which yields a \$34,058 cost per linear foot of the tunnel. The Caldecott Tunnel costs were adjusted based on the RSMeans Catalog city cost index (a regional factor used to adjust cost in different locations) for Oakland, CA. (116.2) and Pittsburgh, PA. (99.6). The Costs in Pittsburgh are 86% of the costs in Oakland. A 25% increase to these costs was applied to account for unidentified work. This results in an Allegheny Tunnel Linear Foot Adjusted Cost of \$36,500 per linear foot of tunnel. To account for inflation of construction cost (an annual increase in cost since 2009 to time of the estimate yielded) a Linear Foot Adjusted cost of \$42,778 was applied per linear foot of tunnel for the updated cost used in 2017.

Make Rt 219 south a TP extension: U.S. 219 is a north south route and the I-76 PA Turnpike is an east west route, directly connecting U.S. 219 to I-76 will not have a substantial impact to the congestion at the project location and does not address the substandard geometric or safety concerns.

The current ADT on the new 11-mile section of U.S. 219 between Somerset and Meyersdale is approximately 3,500 vehicles per day. The majority of the traffic on U.S. 219 is diverted from parallel north south routes such as Garrett Shortcut Road and old SR 219 (Berlin Plank Road). An example is the traffic on the Garrett Shortcut Road (SR 2031) prior to completion of the new portion of U.S. 219 was over 2,000 vehicles per day and following completion the traffic was approximately 500 vehicles per day. Completion of U.S. 219 or providing for a direct connection to the PA Turnpike will not address congestion or safety issues at the tunnel. Converting the southern portion of U.S. 219 to a Turnpike facility would require FHWA approval and would likely not be granted.

Sherwin, Tammy

From: Ken Martin <unitedfireybride@yahoo.com>
Sent: Friday, February 21, 2020 6:20 AM
To: Bednar, P
Subject: Don't reduce the number of tunnels on the turnpike

ALERT - This email is from an **External Source**. Be careful opening attachments, clicking links or responding.

To Gregory,
I am disappointed that you are planning on bypassing the tunnel with a cut. The PA Turnpike is unique that it has those tunnels. When I drive the PA turnpike out that way, I just always love going through the tunnels. I am saddened that you want to eliminate another tunnel.
Ken Martin

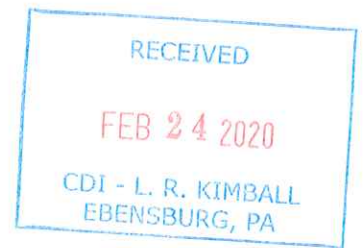
Ken Martin email February 21, 2020
Response to issues identified

Disappointed planning on bypassing the tunnel with a cut: The project team has evaluated many alternatives over the course of the project. There were no Project alternatives that completely avoided environmental impacts, met all Project purpose and needs, and provided for reasonable costs. The Gray Cut Alternative was selected as the Project Preferred Alternative as it best balances all the operational, safety, cost, and environmental considerations that are components of the Project. As noted, the Gray Cut Alternative is not without environmental impacts; therefore, federal and state permits will be required. The safety performance of a cut or by-pass is comparable to other sections of the Turnpike that experience similar weather conditions. The overall crash rate for the Turnpike while approaching or departing the Allegheny Tunnels is more than two times greater than the statewide crash rate for similar interstate segments in PA. It was noted the safety advantage that tunnels gain by offering motorists a short time of protection from adverse weather is offset by the increased number of accidents that are unique to a tunnel and/or its operation. Tunnels also require around the clock maintenance and staffing. The following are examples:

- removal of snow buildup in the tunnel that requires traffic to be stopped (potential for rear end collision)
- equipment maintenance like replacing lights that may require bidirectional traffic in one tube (potential of head on collision)

These items equate to an increased yearly cost the cut options do not have.

New Baltimore Sportsmen's Club
P.O. Box 9
New Baltimore, PA 15553
February 20, 2020



L. R. Kimball

Attn: Tammy Sherwin

615 West Highland Avenue

Ebensburg, PA 15931

RE: Allegheny Tunnel Public Comment

Ladies and Gentlemen

I was representing the New Baltimore Sportsmen's Club at the open house, the turnpike commission held January 16, 2020 in Somerset. The tone of the meeting was that the only solution was the grey cut. The brochure provided at the meeting stated, **The Turnpike Commission selected the grey cut as the projected preferred alternative as it best balances the environmental, engineering, operational, cost, and safety considerations of the project.**

According to the brochure under "Next Step" After gathering input about the proposed alternative from the public and permitting agencies the turnpike will complete the environmental document in winter 2020. This document will be advertised as available for public review for a 30 day period in which time public comments will be gathered. The commission will then proceed with the section 404 permitting of the grey cut alternative while moving in the design process.

Let's start with the environmental impact addressing a cut through the mountain:

- Will destroy undetermined acres of forest land
- It will require another several hundred acres of additional land to dump the material removed
- Approximately 3 more miles of paved roadway dealing with drainage water and chemicals used to treat the ice and snow during the winter season
- The silt from all this work added to the drainage water will be going into the Raystown Branch of the Juniata River or The Stony Creek River.
- The wildlife will continue to cross any place they can find. They will not be looking for a safe place that was designated for them.

New Baltimore Sportsmen's Club
P.O. Box 9
New Baltimore, PA 15553
February 20, 2020

- The possibility of pollution from acid mine water located in the area of the cut being disturbed. This could result in polluting area streams and a public water supply.

Let's focus on the safety factor addressing a cut through the mountain:

- The unbroken mountain has been a migratory route for many animals. If a cut is made they will still continue to migrate north and south, thus crossing the highway. How many accidents will this cause?
- Weather (a cut through the mountain will be subject to heavy fog, wind, freezing rain and snow in the winter, a tunnel is not subject to the weather as a cut would be)

In conclusion the New Baltimore Sportsmen's Club with a membership of over 2450 members prefer that the Turnpike Commission reviews the options of rehabilitating the tunnels instead of the grey cut. We believe this will have the least impact on environment and will provide a safer ride for the traveling public. A cut through the mountain can never be replaced.

Thank you for the opportunity to address this matter.

Sincerely,

Edward C. Will, Secretary

New Baltimore Sportsmen's Club



Cc: Representative Carl Metzgar

Senator Patrick Stefano

Somerset Co Comm. Gerald Walker

New Baltimore Sportsmen's Club letter February 20, 2020
Response to issues identified

The Gray Cut Alternative will destroy undetermined acres of forest land: The Gray Cut alternative is proposed to impact 211.8 acres of forest. This area includes approximately 40.2 acres of forest removal required to remediate an ancient landslide east of the Raystown Branch of Juniata River. The slide area was incorporated in the impact acreage for each of the Gray Alternatives (cut and tunnel). The slide area will require remediation for either of the Gray Alternatives or if the project does not move forward at all. The Project is currently in the planning / environmental phase and the next phase of the project will finalize the design. It is anticipated impacts will be reduced at that time.

It will require another several hundred acres of additional land to dump material removed: The proposed excess excavation area is 98.5 acres and located on land that is a reclaimed strip mine.

Approximately 3 more miles of paved roadway dealing with drainage and chemical treatments: The existing Turnpike roadway cross over both the Raystown Branch of the Juniata River and the Unnamed Tributary to the Stonycreek River (including multiple tributaries of each), as well as several wetland systems. The Turnpike currently uses deicing agent on the roadway that crosses the above noted aquatic resources. All alternatives (cut and tunnel) will cross these same resources and require the use of deicing material in the winter. However, the alternatives developed for the study will utilize new stormwater systems that will collect runoff from large portions of the roadway directing it into stormwater facilities that will be required to meet MS4 provisions, providing greater protection than currently exists.

The silt from the work added to the drainage water will be going into the Raystown Branch Juniata River or the Stonycreek River: A National Pollution Discharge Elimination Systems Permit will be required for the project to address stormwater runoff and drainage. The alternatives developed for the study will utilize new stormwater systems that will collect runoff from large portions of the roadway directing it into stormwater facilities that will be required to meet MS4 provisions, providing greater protection than currently exists.

The wildlife will continue to cross any place they can find: The project team has proposed one overhead wildlife crossing 100 feet wide and 200 feet long and two large bridges over stream valleys to serve as underpasses to facilitate north south wildlife movement. The wildlife crossing is located south of the existing Allegheny Tunnel. This location was chosen as it provides a crossing point for wildlife that is in line with the existing section of contiguous forest area that is found over the Allegheny Tunnel. This crossing, in conjunction with the structures over the Unnamed Tributary to Stonycreek River and the Raystown Branch of Juniata River, are intended to provide locations along the new section of highway that will allow for the safe movement of wildlife. Fencing will also be utilized to guide the wildlife to safe crossings as much as possible. As the project continues, the project team will coordinate with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Pennsylvania Game Commission to improve the design of wildlife crossings.

Possibility of pollution from acid mine water may pollute area streams and a public water supply: Water encountered from excavation will be captured and treated as necessary prior to release to surface water systems. A thin section analysis on limited borings confirmed the presence of pyrite. Most of the pyrite occurs as microscopic grains, some of which is framboidal. It should be noted the pyrite evaluated via Scanning Electron Microscope (SEM) does not originate from hydrothermal solutions as secondary depositions as was the case in the Sky-Top Investigation near State College regarding the I-99 corridor. Appropriate studies will be completed as the project moves forward into final design to identify acidic problematic area such that design can minimize or eliminate the risk. Additional studies will be conducted during final design to identify areas of concern regarding groundwater.

Two (2) preliminary analyses were conducted regarding potential project impacts to the Berlin Borough public water supply. The first was conducted by Casselberry and Associates in 2000. The report analyzed the Orange, Brown, Yellow and Red corridors. The Red Tunnel alternative was in close proximity to the location of Gray Corridor. As noted in the 2000 report, the major conclusions of C&A's study are as follows:

- The closest public water supply source to the Allegheny Mountain Tunnels is the Berlin Borough Well Field. The capture zone for this well field lies some two miles up-gradient of the project area. Therefore, none of the potential Turnpike improvement scenarios pose any threat of contamination or diminution to Berlin's water supply.
- The aquifer systems local to the area, affected by the Turnpike improvement options, have extremely small, mountain-slope, recharge areas and contain limited groundwater resources. Therefore, none of the improvement scenarios have the potential to impact a regional drinking water source. At this point and time, use of the aquifer systems located in close proximity to the existing and future-potential Turnpike corridors is limited to a low density of rural residential and agricultural groundwater supplies.
- A comprehensive groundwater supply study of Somerset County was completed to identify potential groundwater sources for municipal use. The closest potential well field to the Turnpike project study area lies on the Stoney Creek valley floor some 8000 feet west of the existing tunnels. This potential well field targets an aquifer unit that would not be disturbed by the proposed roadway improvements. Therefore, none of the roadway construction scenarios contemplated in this project pose a threat to aquifer systems that could be utilized in the future for the development of regional groundwater sources.
- The potential impacts of the proposed project will be limited to local-scale problems involving:
 - Interception of shallow groundwater systems that provide base flow to small perennial streams, wetlands and domestic water supply sources.
 - Groundwater and surface water contamination resulting from construction activities (siltation) and the eventual application of deicing compounds.

The second study was conducted in 2016 by L.R. Kimball to evaluate the Gray Corridor. The following areas were assessed:

- Well quantity
- Water quality
- Contamination of recharge area
- Infiltration of surface contaminants
- Impacts to well field aquifer

Contamination to the Borough water supplies is not likely; as ground and surface water flow directions do not traverse or migrate from the Project area to the wells or springs. In addition, the Borough wells are situated south of a wind gap between ridges that define the Allegheny Front. This "break" or gap in the ridge complex creates a topographic barrier, which will provide protection from potential acid contamination resulting from construction of a selected alternative. Water encountered from the excavation will be captured and treated as necessary prior to release to surface water systems. Appropriate studies will be completed as the project moves forward into final design to identify acidic problematic area such that design can minimize or eliminate the risk.

The thin section analysis confirmed that most of the pyrite occurs as microscopic grains, some of which is framboidal. The nature of the framboidal pyrite will deteriorate at a faster rate for large grains. The thin section work also produced images that confirm the rock type, sulfidic type and depositional characteristics.

The wells and Project area share geologic rock/units associated with the Mauch Chunk / Burgoon sequence. Based on previous well reports (Casselberry, 2000); capture zones associated with the wells and these geologic units are not within the study limits of the Gray Corridor. As for the immediate Allegheny Front, regional groundwater flow is in part controlled by the fracture network associated with the Raystown Branch of the Juniata River valley. Where flow is directed to the Raystown Branch of the Juniata River Valley (both surface and subsurface). A component of groundwater flow associated with this fracture system flows to the northeast in a similar flow direction of the river away from the Borough water supplies.

Topographically the springs lie southwest of the Project and reside in a different ridge complex than the Project. The springs are situated "up gradient" and are located 3.5 miles southwest of the Project area. In consideration of the proposed Project Corridors, existing site and geologic characteristics, contamination resultant of the Project to the Borough water supplies is not likely.

The 2016 report also notes the following recommendations should be considered as the project progresses to alleviate concerns and have a mitigation plan in place for unforeseen circumstances:

- The blasting plan to be used in construction must take into consideration the distance to the recharge area of the Berlin well field and springs. There are approximately 1.6 miles of separation distance between the Gray Corridor and the Berlin well field which provides some barrier/space between the wells and Project with regards to blasting and excavation. A full analysis of blasting impacts will be evaluated on the selected alternative as design progresses.
- Implementation of a monitoring program (prior to, during and after construction) to define if a groundwater relationship exists between the Berlin water supplies and selected alternative. This information will serve as a base line of water quality and quantity and provide a basis of comparison to evaluate if impacts have occurred to water resources resultant of construction activities.
- Development of a program that facilitates the exchange of technical information (between PTC and Borough) as it relates to the quality and quantity of the Berlin water supplies before, during and after construction.
- Development of a plan for implementation of an alternate water supply that could be timely executed should adverse unforeseen effects to the Berlin water supplies occur.

The unbroken mountain has been a migratory route for many animals. The wildlife will continue to cross the highway. How many accidents will this cause: Please see response above concerning wildlife crossing.

Weather: The elevation difference between the existing Turnpike roadway and the proposed gray cut is approximately 224 feet. It is expected that either option (Rehabilitation/new tunnel or Gray Cut alternative) will experience very similar weather conditions for the area. Based on the Gray Tunnel length (3,045') and increased length of the Gray Tunnel alternative (335') as compared to the Gray Cut, drivers will only experience 31 seconds less of adverse weather in a tunnel. The safety advantage that tunnels gain by offering motorists protection from adverse weather is offset by the increased number of accidents that are unique to a tunnel and/or its operation. The PTC is continually updating its systems to include the most modern facilities for sensing weather conditions across the Turnpike. This would include a variety of methods for sensing weather

conditions and changing operations in response, such as the use of changeable message signs and traveler advisory radio in the vicinity of the Allegheny Mountains. Weather related accidents are not completely avoidable, but today's technologies allow for monitoring of weather and road conditions and alerting travelers to those conditions in real time. Traditional methods continue to be used to mitigate for severe weather conditions as they occur. For snow and freezing roadway conditions, the PTC regularly applies deicing and antiskid materials, as well as plowing. These conditions including fog can also be mitigated in part by warning systems or the posting of mandatory lower speeds.

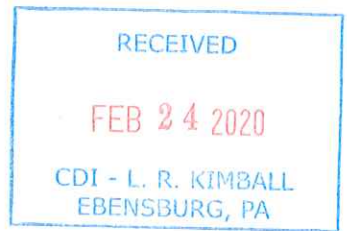
Prefers options of rehabilitating the tunnels: A conceptual design and cost estimate was developed by Paul C. Rizzo Associates, Inc. for widening both the east bound and west bound tunnels. An evaluation of the available geologic and geotechnical information was presented and the suitability of various types of excavation equipment was evaluated.

Based on the existing information and time constraints imposed on the construction, widening of the existing Allegheny Tunnel was determined not practical for the following reasons:

- Disturbance to the South Penn Railroad Tunnel, directly or indirectly due to construction activities, has the potential to affect the federally endangered Indiana bat, and other bat species that utilize this known hibernaculum.
- Potential failure to provide adequate ventilation during construction activities will reduce traffic visibility due to dust.
- The cost of widening the existing Allegheny Tunnel and associated roadway improvements is nearly \$500 million.
- The progress of the project is affected by maintenance of traffic, low production rates of excavation and seasonal restrictions, resulting in an unacceptable construction duration of up to twenty (20) years.
- Traffic cannot be in a tunnel during the installation or disassembly of the tunnel shield, resulting in bi-directional traffic in the one tunnel that is not being worked on. The sequential closings of the tunnels, or reduction to one lane of traffic for a day or two, occurs for a total of two hundred thirteen (213) intermittent days. Numerous traffic stoppages will also be associated with blasting. The traffic control measures required with the widening of the existing tunnels are not practical due to the interruption of traffic flow, increased potential of accidents and substantial congestion generated by these operations.
- The contractor will have reasonable and appropriate safety measures in place; however, due to the nature of the construction activities and confined working space adjacent to traffic, there is a substantially increased risk of a major incident occurring during the widening of the existing tunnels.

Additionally, multiple hybrid variations of using one or both of the existing tubes were evaluated. Several of the variations included performing major rehabilitation on the existing tubes for use of westbound traffic, build a new 3-lane tube for eastbound traffic and address the substandard curve to the east of the existing tunnel, or rehabilitating just the southern 2-lane tube, abandon the northern tube, build an additional 2-lane and a 3-lane tube and flatten the substandard curve. Both variations have two issues. The first is the 4-lane westbound traffic would be required to diverge east of the new tunnels and then merge west of the tunnels, while this is possible it creates a less than desirable traffic pattern. Second and more critical issue is that both variations require the revising of the existing curve east of the tunnel to meet the minimum curve radius. The required minimum radius and maintaining the elevation of the existing tunnel would have a major impact to the area of geotechnical remediation associated with the Gray Cut Alternative. The impacted area of the ancient landslide

would be substantially larger for the alternatives using the existing tube(s) than compared to the Gray Cut Alternative. This would result in increased forest removal and potentially additional aquatic resource impacts.



Public Plans Display - January 16, 2020

COMMENT FORM

Please Provide Your Comments or Suggestions:

The Allegheny Township Supervisors of Somerset County, have the following concerns
for the proposed tunnel improvement project:

1. Water flow disturbance
2. Water runoff problems
3. Water contamination
4. Loss of real estate tax dollars

Allegheny Township Supervisors

10122 Glades Pike, Berlin, PA 15530

814-267-3111

nancy.metzgar.alleghenytwp@verizon.net

Nancy Metzgar, Secretary

Please mail or fax this form to:

L.R. Kimball
Attn: Tammy Sherwin
615 West Highland Avenue
Ebensburg, PA 15931

Fax: 814-472-7712

All responses must be received by February 27, 2020

Allegheny Township Supervisors Comment Form February 24, 2020
Response to issues identified

Water flow disturbance, water runoff and water contamination problems: There will be localized ground water impacts for all of the alternatives. The project team will continue to conduct additional studies locally throughout the design and construction of the project to ensure water sources are not interrupted.

A National Pollutant Discharge Elimination Systems (NPDES) Permit will be required for the project to address stormwater runoff and drainage. The alternatives developed for the study will utilize new stormwater systems that will collect runoff from large portions of the roadway directing it into stormwater facilities that will be required to meet MS4 provisions, providing greater protection than currently exists.

Water encountered from excavation will be captured and treated as necessary prior to release to surface water systems. A thin section analysis on limited borings confirmed the presence of pyrite. Most of the pyrite occurs as microscopic grains, some of which is framboidal. It should be noted the pyrite evaluated via Scanning Electron Microscope (SEM) does not originate from hydrothermal solutions as secondary depositions as was the case in the Sky-Top Investigation near State College regarding the I-99 corridor. Appropriate studies will be completed as the project moves forward into final design to identify acidic problematic area such that design can minimize or eliminate the risk. Additional studies will be conducted during final design to identify areas of concern regarding groundwater.

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- The potential impacts of the proposed project will be limited to local-scale problems involving:
 - Interception of shallow groundwater systems that provide base flow to small perennial streams, wetlands and domestic water supply sources.
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- Well quantity
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Contamination to the Borough water supplies is not likely; as ground and surface water flow directions do not traverse or migrate from the Project area to the wells or springs. In addition, the Borough wells are situated south of a wind gap between ridges that define the Allegheny Front. This "break" or gap in the ridge complex creates a topographic barrier, which will provide protection from potential acid contamination resulting from construction of a selected alternative. Water encountered from the excavation will be captured and treated as necessary prior to release to surface water systems. Appropriate studies will be completed as the project moves forward into final design to identify acidic problematic area such that design can minimize or eliminate the risk.

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- Development of a program that facilitates the exchange of technical information (between PTC and Borough) as it relates to the quality and quantity of the Berlin water supplies before, during and after construction.
- Development of a plan for implementation of an alternate water supply that could be timely executed should adverse unforeseen effects to the Berlin water supplies occur.

Loss of real estate tax dollars: This comment has been noted.

The Municipal Authority of the Borough of Berlin

700 North Street
Berlin, PA 15530

Telephone: 814-267-3837
Fax: 814-267-3017

February 25, 2020

Mr. Mark Compton, CEO
P. Gregory Bednar, P.E., Project Manager
Pennsylvania Turnpike Commission
P.O. Box 67676
Harrisburg, PA 17106-7676

MAR 3 2020

Dear Mr. Compton and Mr. Bednar:

The Municipal Authority of the Borough of Berlin located in Somerset County owns and operates a public water supply system that is the sole source of water for 1,020 metered residential customers serving between 2,650 and 2,700 people. In addition, the system provides water to 73 commercial customers (including an elementary school, a middle school, and a high school), one nursing care home, one industrial facility, and one wastewater treatment facility. The industrial customer is Snyder of Berlin (owned by Utz), a producer of snack foods. Snyder of Berlin alone depends on our Municipal Water System to provide up to 150,000 gallons of quality water per workday. The remaining customers require up to an additional 350,000 gallons of potable water per day.

The source of the great majority of the water provided by the Municipal Authority to the above-referenced customers is from three water wells located approximately 5 miles northeast of Berlin, Pennsylvania, adjacent to the south side of Pennsylvania State Route 0031. The wells draw water from the Mauch Chunk aquifer, which, according to hydrogeologist James Casselberry, is an aquifer that contains excellent quality water. Should the quality and/or quantity of water produced by these wells be negatively affected, the Municipal Authority would no longer be able to meet the water needs essential to its customers.

That brings us to address our very serious concerns about the potential impact that a new Allegheny Mountain turnpike tunnel or a tunnel bypass construction project would have on our primary water supply wells. We believe it is imperative that you and the Pennsylvania Turnpike Commission have an independent in-depth study and analyses of the impacts that any alternative being considered could have on our municipal public water supply sources. We implore you and the Commission to do so. Furthermore, if there is any possibility of detriment to our public water supply sources, the corresponding alternative(s) must be dropped and no longer pursued.

Kindly respond with your intentions and the intentions of the Pennsylvania Turnpike Commission on this matter.

Sincerely,

THE MUNICIPAL AUTHORITY OF
THE BOROUGH OF BERLIN

C. Scott Miller
Chairman

pc Governor Thomas W. Wolf
Lieutenant Governor John Fetterman
DEP Secretary Patrick McDonnell
Senator Patrick J. Stefano
Representative Carl Walker Metzgar



Pennsylvania Turnpike Commission

PO Box 67676
Harrisburg PA 17106-7676
717.939.9551

March 9, 2020

The Municipal Authority of the Borough of Berlin
700 North Street
Berlin, PA 15530
Attention: Chairman Miller

RE: Allegheny Tunnel Transportation Improvement Project
Preliminary Analysis of Impacts to Berlin Borough Water Supply

Dear Chairman Miller:

The Pennsylvania Turnpike Commission (PTC) would like to thank you for participating in the public involvement process associated with the Allegheny Tunnel Transportation Improvement Project. Participation of stakeholders like the Municipal Authority of the Borough of Berlin (Borough) are key to developing a successful project that provides the most balanced alternative. We understand the concerns of the Authority and want to assure you the design team has proactively evaluated the possibility of this project adversely impacting the Borough's water supply.

As you are aware, two (2) preliminary analyses were conducted regarding potential project impacts to the Borough's public water supply. The first was conducted by Casselberry and Associates in 2000. The report analyzed the Orange, Brown, Yellow and Red corridors. The Red Tunnel alternative was in close proximity to the location of Gray Corridor. As noted in the 2000 report, the major conclusions of C&A's study are as follows:

- The closest public water supply source to the Allegheny Mountain Tunnels is the Berlin Borough Well Field. The capture zone for this well field lies some two (2) miles up-gradient of the project area. Therefore, none of the potential PTC improvement scenarios pose any threat of contamination or diminution to the Borough's water supply.
- The aquifer systems local to the area, affected by the PTC improvement options, have extremely small, mountain-slope, recharge areas and contain limited groundwater resources. Therefore, none of the improvement scenarios have the potential to impact a regional drinking water source. At this point and time, use of the aquifer systems located in close proximity to the existing and future-potential PTC corridors is limited to a low density of rural residential and agricultural groundwater supplies.
- A comprehensive groundwater supply study of Somerset County was completed to identify potential groundwater sources for municipal use. The closest potential well field to the PTC project study area lies on the Stoney Creek valley floor some 8000 feet west of the existing tunnels. This potential well field targets an aquifer unit that would not be disturbed by the proposed roadway improvements. Therefore, none of the roadway construction scenarios contemplated in this project pose a threat to aquifer systems that could be utilized in the future for the development of regional groundwater sources.
- The potential impacts of the proposed project will be limited to local-scale problems involving:
 - Interception of shallow groundwater systems that provide base flow to small perennial streams, wetlands and domestic water supply sources.
 - Groundwater and surface water contamination resulting from construction activities (siltation) and the eventual application of deicing compounds.



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The second study was conducted in 2016 by L.R. Kimball to evaluate the Gray Corridor. The following areas were assessed:

- Well quantity
- Water quality
- Contamination of recharge area
- Infiltration of surface contaminants
- Impacts to well field aquifer

Contamination to the Borough water supplies is not likely; as ground and surface water flow directions do not traverse or migrate from the Project area to the wells or springs. In addition, the Borough's wells are situated south of a wind gap between ridges that define the Allegheny Front. This "break" or gap in the ridge complex creates a topographic barrier, which will provide protection from potential acid contamination resulting from construction of a selected alternative. Water encountered from the excavation will be captured and treated as necessary prior to release to surface water systems. Appropriate studies will be completed as the project moves forward into final design to identify acidic problematic area such that design can minimize or eliminate the risk.

The thin section analysis confirmed that most of the pyrite occurs as microscopic grains, some of which is framboidal. The nature of the framboidal pyrite will deteriorate at a faster rate for large grains. The thin section work also produced images that confirm the rock type, sulfidic type and depositional characteristics.

The wells and Project area share geologic rock/units associated with the Mauch Chunk / Burgoon sequence. Based on previous well reports (Casselberry, 2000); capture zones associated with the wells and these geologic units are not within the study limits of the Gray Corridor. As for the immediate Allegheny Front, regional groundwater flow is in part controlled by the fracture network associated with the Raystown Branch of the Juniata River valley. Where flow is directed to the Raystown Branch of the Juniata River Valley (both surface and subsurface). A component of groundwater flow associated with this fracture system flows to the northeast in a similar flow direction of the river away from the Borough's water supplies.

Topographically the springs lie southwest of the Project and reside in a different ridge complex than the Project. The springs are situated "up gradient" and are located 3.5 miles southwest of the Project area. In consideration of the proposed Project Corridors, existing site and geologic characteristics, contamination resultant of the Project to the Borough's water supplies is not likely.

The 2016 report also notes the following recommendations should be considered as the project progresses to alleviate concerns and have a mitigation plan in place for unforeseen circumstances:

- The blasting plan to be used in construction must take into consideration the distance to the recharge area of the Berlin well field and springs. There are approximately 1.6 miles of separation distance between the Gray Corridor and the Berlin well field which provides some barrier/space between the wells and Project with regards to blasting and excavation. A full analysis of blasting impacts will be evaluated on the selected alternative as design progresses.

Chairman Miller
March 6, 2020
Page 3

- Implementation of a monitoring program (prior to, during and after construction) to define if a groundwater relationship exists between the Berlin water supplies and selected alternative. This information will serve as a base line of water quality and quantity and provide a basis of comparison to evaluate if impacts have occurred to water resources resultant of construction activities.
- Development of a program that facilitates the exchange of technical information (between PTC and Borough) as it relates to the quality and quantity of the Berlin water supplies before, during and after construction.
- Development of a plan for implementation of an alternate water supply that could be timely executed should adverse unforeseen effects to the Berlin water supplies occur.

Both reports were supplied (as requested at the Public Plans Display on January 16, 2020) to a Municipal Authority member via email on January 23, 2020. The PTC can provide additional copies upon request.

The concern exhibited by the Berlin Municipal Authority is understandable. The PTC will evaluate the preferred alternative as noted above and will continue coordination with the Authority. Based on the existing studies and the planned future coordination with the Borough, the PTC intends to move forward with design of the Gray Cut Alternative.

Sincerely,



Matthew R. Burd, PE
Interchange / Special Projects Unit Manager

Sherwin, Tammy

From: Bednar, P <gbednar@paturnpike.com>
Sent: Tuesday, February 25, 2020 7:23 AM
To: Jones, Ed; Sherwin, Tammy
Cc: Graham, Gary; Burd, Matthew; Lutz, Andrew
Subject: [External Mail] FW: Allegheny Tunnel improvement
Attachments: Allegheny Mtn. 1-29-20.jpg; Allegheny Mtn. 2-1-20.jpg

[EXTERNAL MAIL] Please report any suspicious attachments, links, or requests for sensitive information to customersupport@synoptek.com.

Received late last night.

Sent from my Verizon, Samsung Galaxy smartphone

----- Original message -----

From: Bell & Dickey <bellanddickey@comcast.net>
Date: 2/24/20 11:57 PM (GMT-05:00)
To: "Bednar, P" <gbednar@paturnpike.com>
Subject: Allegheny Tunnel improvement

ALERT - This email is from an **External Source**. Be careful opening attachments, clicking links or responding.

Mr. Bednar,

I write with comments concerning the proposed update of the Allegheny Tunnel and, moreover, in strenuous opposition to any alternative that would substitute a “cut” for an upgrade and/or addition to the present tunnel on the Pennsylvania Turnpike.

Notwithstanding the horrible environmental damage a cut option would cause, not the least of which is the forest degradation from the endless saline spray – viz., the wide corridor of dead trees and the mutated, stunted growth of the still living trees lining the current Laurel Mountain bypass section of the Turnpike – the overriding concern is what I believe to be, in fact, the reckless disregard for safety that would be caused by regular weather on that section of highway over the Allegheny ridge if the tunnel were to be bypassed.

My home is located along the Brotherton Road in Brothersvalley Township and looks out, to the East, upon the Allegheny Mountain. As such, I am a daily observer of the weather affecting that ridge. With great frequency, from a line routinely between the elevations of 2,400 and 2,500 feet to the top of that mountain, fog / clouds, obscure the view and, in winter, even when precipitation has ceased at lower elevations, snow and sleet occur. As just two examples of those weather phenomena, I have attached photos taken of the Allegheny Mountain in the direction of the tunnel and proposed bypass. The January 29 photo shows snow on the mountain and the February 1 photo shows the mountain enveloped in fog at those altitudes and above.

I am also a frequent traveler on Route 31 over the Allegheny Mountain (known here as the White Horse). That location is not too far distant to the South from the Allegheny Tunnel location. Again, at those elevations, fog is a regular occurrence, particularly in the autumn, with visibility reduced to distances measured in feet, not even tens of feet. Local people travelling that section of road often speak of times when the only way to determine location of the lane of travel is to look beside the vehicle to spot the painted centerline.

It behooves you at the very least, out of concern for safety, to do a day-to-day study of the unique and very local weather in the intended bypass location, over a considerable period of time, to accurately observe these conditions of ice and snow and reduced visibility that cannot be ascertained simply by looking at weather observation statistics form other areas of Somerset and Bedford Counties or of the area in general.

Further, I would suggest you look at an analogous section of I-68 as it crosses the mountain ridges in the areas of Frostburg and Keyser's Ridge, Maryland. Both of those areas have been the sites of multi-vehicle pileup collisions when sudden, altitude-related weather caused exceedingly low visibility, sometimes combined with low traction road conditions.

Douglas Bell

**Post Office Box 65
Berlin, Pennsylvania 15530
Telephone (814) 267-4490**



Douglas Bell Email February 24, 2020
Responses to issues identified

Oppose a cut alternative. Would cause horrible environmental damage: The project team has evaluated many alternatives over the course of the project. There were no Project alternatives that completely avoided environmental impacts, met all Project purpose and needs, and provided for reasonable costs. Every alternative studied includes areas of cut. The tunnel alternatives consist of a noticeably shorter length of tunnel as compared to the existing Allegheny Tunnel. The intact ridge length will not be the same as today with any of the alternatives. With regard to environmental impacts, the Gray Cut has lower wetland impacts compared to the other alternatives and does not impact the travel corridor of federal and state threatened and endangered bats that all of the northern alternatives impact. One of the reasons the Gray Cut is proposed to move forward is the proximity to the existing Turnpike utilizing previously disturbed area and the edge habitat created by the existing turnpike thus reducing the amount of interior forest impact as much as possible. Each tunnel alternative consists of cut and fill along with a shorter length of tunnel (compared to the existing Allegheny Tunnel). Each of the tunnel alternatives are located within more of the interior forest, further away from the existing Turnpike. While each alternative contains a tunnel that keeps a smaller length of contiguous forest intact (than the existing tunnel) it is creating additional edge habitat deeper within the forest than the Gray Cut alternative. The project team has proposed one overhead wildlife crossing and two structures over stream valleys to sever as underpasses to facilitate north south wildlife movement. As the project continues, the project team will coordinate with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Pennsylvania Game Commission to improve the design of wildlife crossings.

The existing Turnpike roadway crosses over both the Raystown Branch of the Juniata River and the Unnamed Tributary to the Stonycreek River (including multiple tributaries of each), as well as several wetland systems. For example, the Turnpike currently uses deicing agent on the roadway that crosses the above noted aquatic resources. All alternatives (cut and tunnel) will cross these same resources and require the use of deicing material in the winter. However, the alternatives developed for the study will utilize new stormwater systems that will collect runoff from large portions of the roadway directing it into stormwater facilities that will be required to meet MS4 provisions, providing greater protection than currently exists. Also, water encountered from excavation will be captured and treated as necessary prior to release to surface water systems. A thin section analysis on limited borings confirmed the presence of pyrite. Most of the pyrite occurs as microscopic grains, some of which is framboidal. It should be noted the pyrite evaluated via Scanning Electron Microscope (SEM) does not originate from hydrothermal solutions as secondary depositions as was the case in the Sky-Top Investigation near State College regarding the I-99 corridor. Appropriate studies will be completed as the project moves forward into final design to identify acidic problematic area such that design can minimize or eliminate the risk.

The project team will continue coordination with the environmental agencies throughout the design and construction of the project. Additionally, the Turnpike Commission is responsible to follow state and federal environmental regulations necessary to obtain permits prior to construction including PA Code Chapter 105, Section 401 and 404 of the Clean Water Act, Section 7 of the Endangered Species act and the National Historic Preservation Act to mention a few.

Disregard for safety and weather: While tunnels are safe, an open cut has additional safety advantages:

- The cut alternative has a shoulder that provides multiple benefits:
 - a recovery area exists if a driver errantly departs from a lane,
 - should a vehicle become disabled the shoulder provides an area to be out of the travel lane
 - drivers have additional space if they are adjacent to a distracted driver
- tunnels require periodic maintenance including:
 - removal of snow buildup in the tunnel that requires traffic to be stopped (potential for rear end collision)

- equipment maintenance like replacing lights that may require bidirectional traffic in one tube (potential of head on collision)
- standard speed reduction required for tunnels (potential for rear end collision).

The tunnel options do provide a short duration where the driver is not exposed to adverse weather conditions, 31 seconds for the Gray Tunnel for example, but the previously discussed issues have a larger impact on driver safety. The overall crash rate for the Turnpike while approaching or departing the Allegheny Tunnels is more than two times greater than the statewide crash rate for similar interstate segments in PA. It was noted the safety advantage that tunnels gain by offering motorists protection from adverse weather is offset by the increased number of accidents that are unique to a tunnel and/or its operation.

The elevation difference between the existing Turnpike roadway and the proposed gray cut is approximately 224 feet. It is expected that either option (Rehabilitation/new tunnel or Gray Cut alternative) will experience very similar weather conditions for the area. Based on the Gray Tunnel length (3,045') and increased length of the Gray Tunnel alternative (335') as compared to the Gray Cut, drivers will only experience 31 seconds less of adverse weather in a tunnel. The safety advantage that tunnels gain by offering motorists protection from adverse weather is offset by the increased number of accidents that are unique to a tunnel and/or its operation. The PTC is continually updating its systems to include the most modern facilities for sensing weather conditions across the Turnpike. This would include a variety of methods for sensing weather conditions and changing operations in response, such as the use of changeable message signs and traveler advisory radio in the vicinity of the Allegheny Mountains. Weather related accidents are not completely avoidable, but today's technologies allow for monitoring of weather and road conditions and alerting travelers to those conditions in real time. Traditional methods continue to be used to mitigate for severe weather conditions as they occur. For snow and freezing roadway conditions, the PTC regularly applies deicing and antiskid materials, as well as plowing. These conditions including fog can also be mitigated in part by warning systems or the posting of mandatory lower speeds.

RECEIVED
FEB 26 2020
CDI - L. R. KIMBALL
EBENSBURG, PA

Public Plans Display - January 16, 2020

COMMENT FORM



Jon Lape
645 Deeter Gap Rd.
Berlin, PA 15530

Please Provide Your Comments or Suggestions:

As a resident of the mountain I oppose any of the cut options?

Reasons why #1 - Heavy fog for days at a time

#2 - Heavy ice storms

#3 - Heavy snowfall

#4 - Flood potential down stream

#5 - major disruption to wildlife travel

#6 - Destroy the beauty of the mountain

The only option that I approve of is the yellow tunnel option, as this would be the safest for travelers and least impact on the environment !!!

Please mail or fax this form to:

L.R. Kimball
Attn: Tammy Sherwin
615 West Highland Avenue
Ebensburg, PA ~~15111~~
15931
Fax: 814-472-7712

All responses must be received by February 22, 2020

Jon Lape Comment Form February 26, 2020
Responses to issues identified

Tunnel is safest option for travelers and weather: While tunnels are safe, an open cut has additional safety advantages:

- The cut alternative has a full width shoulder that provides multiple benefits:
 - a recovery area exists if a driver errantly departs from a lane,
 - should a vehicle become disabled the shoulder provides an area of refuge
 - drivers have additional space if they are adjacent to a distracted driver
- Tunnels require periodic maintenance including:
 - removal of snow buildup in the tunnel that requires traffic to be stopped (potential for rear end collision)
 - equipment maintenance like replacing lights that may require bidirectional traffic in one tube (potential of head on collision)
- Standard speed reduction required for tunnels, 70 MPH to 55 MPH (potential for rear end collision).

The tunnel options do provide a short duration where the driver is not exposed to adverse weather conditions, 31 seconds for the Gray Tunnel for example, but the previously discussed issues have a larger impact on driver safety. The overall crash rate for the Turnpike while approaching or departing the Allegheny Tunnels is more than two times greater than the statewide crash rate for similar interstate segments in PA. It was noted the safety advantage that tunnels gain by offering motorists protection from adverse weather is offset by the increased number of accidents that are unique to a tunnel and/or its operation.

The elevation difference between the existing Turnpike roadway and the proposed gray cut is approximately 224 feet. It is expected that either option (Rehabilitation/new tunnel or Gray Cut alternative) will experience very similar weather conditions for the area. Based on the Gray Tunnel length (3,045') and increased length of the Gray Tunnel alternative (335') as compared to the Gray Cut, drivers will only experience 31 seconds less of adverse weather in a tunnel. The safety advantage that tunnels gain by offering motorists protection from adverse weather is offset by the increased number of accidents that are unique to a tunnel and/or its operation. The PTC is continually updating its systems to include the most modern facilities for sensing weather conditions across the Turnpike. This would include a variety of methods for sensing weather conditions and changing operations in response, such as the use of changeable message signs and traveler advisory radio in the vicinity of the Allegheny Mountains. Weather related accidents are not completely avoidable, but today's technologies allow for monitoring of weather and road conditions and alerting travelers to those conditions in real time. Traditional methods continue to be used to mitigate for severe weather conditions as they occur. For snow and freezing roadway conditions, the PTC regularly applies deicing and antiskid materials, as well as plowing. These conditions including fog can also be mitigated in part by warning systems or the posting of mandatory lower speeds.

Flooding: The alternatives developed for the study will utilize new stormwater systems that will collect runoff from large portions of the roadway directing it into stormwater facilities that will be required to meet MS4 provisions. As a part of the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit the PTC is required to complete a Post - Construction Stormwater Analysis that assures there will not be an adverse impact to downstream waters and property owners.

No access across mountain top for wildlife: The project team has proposed one dedicated overhead wildlife crossing 100 feet wide and 200 feet long and two large bridges over stream valleys to serve as underpasses to facilitate north south wildlife movement. The wildlife crossing is located south of the existing Allegheny Tunnel. This location was chosen as it provides a crossing point for wildlife that is in line with the existing section of contiguous forest area that is found over the Allegheny Tunnel. This crossing, in conjunction with the structures over the Unnamed Tributary to Stonycreek River and the Raystown Branch of Juniata River, are intended to provide locations

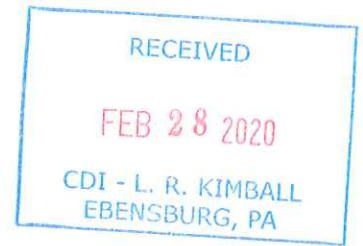
along the new section of highway that will allow for the safe movement of wildlife. As the project continues, the project team will coordinate with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Pennsylvania Game Commission to improve the design of wildlife crossings.

Destroying an eco-system: The project team has evaluated many alternatives over the course of the project. There were no Project alternatives that completely avoided environmental impacts, met all Project purpose and needs, and provided for reasonable costs. Every alternative studied includes areas of cut. The tunnel alternatives consist of a noticeably shorter length of tunnel as compared to the existing Allegheny Tunnel. The intact ridge length will not be the same as today with any of the alternatives. With regard to environmental impacts, the Gray Cut has lower wetland impacts compared to the other alternatives and does not impact the travel corridor of federal and state threatened and endangered bats that all of the northern alternatives impact. One of the reasons the Gray Cut is proposed to move forward is the proximity to the existing Turnpike utilizing previously disturbed area and the edge habitat created by the existing turnpike thus reducing the amount of interior forest impact as much as possible. Each tunnel alternative consists of cut and fill along with a shorter length of tunnel (compared to the existing Allegheny Tunnel). Each of the tunnel alternatives are located within more of the interior forest, further away from the existing Turnpike. While each alternative contains a tunnel that keeps a smaller length of contiguous forest intact (than the existing tunnel) it is creating additional edge habitat deeper within the forest than the Gray Cut alternative. The project team has proposed one overhead wildlife crossing and two structures over stream valleys to serve as underpasses to facilitate north south wildlife movement. As the project continues, the project team will coordinate with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Pennsylvania Game Commission to improve the design of wildlife crossings.

The existing Turnpike roadway crosses over both the Raystown Branch of the Juniata River and the Unnamed Tributary to the Stonycreek River (including multiple tributaries of each), as well as several wetland systems. For example, the Turnpike currently uses deicing agent on the roadway that crosses the above noted aquatic resources. All alternatives (cut and tunnel) will cross these same resources and require the use of deicing material in the winter. However, the alternatives developed for the study will utilize new stormwater systems that will collect runoff from large portions of the roadway directing it into stormwater facilities that will be required to meet MS4 provisions, providing greater protection than currently exists. Also, water encountered from excavation will be captured and treated as necessary prior to release to surface water systems. A thin section analysis on limited borings confirmed the presence of pyrite. Most of the pyrite occurs as microscopic grains, some of which is framboidal. It should be noted the pyrite evaluated via Scanning Electron Microscope (SEM) does not originate from hydrothermal solutions as secondary depositions as was the case in the Sky-Top Investigation near State College regarding the I-99 corridor. Appropriate studies will be completed as the project moves forward into final design to identify acidic problematic area such that design can minimize or eliminate the risk.

The project team will continue coordination with the environmental agencies throughout the design and construction of the project. Additionally, the Turnpike Commission is responsible to follow state and federal environmental regulations necessary to obtain permits prior to construction including PA Code Chapter 105, Section 401 and 404 of the Clean Water Act, Section 7 of the Endangered Species act and the National Historic Preservation Act to mention a few.

It is the PTC's intent to revegetate as much disturbance as is feasible and possible. The steeper area of cut will be left as exposed rock. The gap created will be similar in size to other existing gaps in the ridge. There is a parallel ridge 4,000 ft to the east of the Allegheny Ridge in the location of the project. The eastern ridge in the area of the cut is approximately the same elevation as the Allegheny Ridge at the location of the cut. This eastern ridge will limit the view from the east to the limits of this project. The impacts to the view of the ridge line from the west will be minimized by the parallel eastern ridge. In addition, there are ten natural gaps in the Allegheny Ridge within a 20-mile radius of the project. The average depth of the natural gaps is approximately 265 ft and have an average top width of 3,200 ft. The gap created by the cut will have a slightly smaller depth compared to other existing gaps in the ridge with a substantially narrower top width.



Public Plans Display - January 16, 2020

COMMENT FORM

Please Provide Your Comments or Suggestions:

(1st) Complete RT 219 to address hazard Truck Traffic, Last 7+0.9 miles has been proposed since 50 yrs ago.

(2nd) Complete 1 new Tunnel because to not upset water Table surges for Juniata waterways and Stony creek basin waterways

(3rd) Safety issues a cut will causes more accidents on temperate Water will flow in cut, 3/4 of mile wide, Wind chill factors from cut will freeze.

(4th) Will affect farming by way of water, climate due to cut Look at Western cut from Donegal to Somerset (More accidents in this section

(5th) Why cannot your company see the environmental, esthetic wildlife and safety issues, and cannot use 1940's technology and reason, with new 2020 technology for new tunnel?

Please mail or fax this form to:

L.R. Kimball
Attn: Tammy Sherwin
615 West Highland Avenue
Ebensburg, PA 15931

Fax: 814-472-7712

All responses must be received by February 27, 2020

Comment Form February 28, 2020
Responses to issues identified

Complete RT 219: U.S. 219 is a north south route and the I-76 PA Turnpike is an east west route. Completing U.S. 219 to I-76 will not have a substantial impact to the congestion at the project location and does not address the substandard geometric or safety concerns.

The current ADT on the new 11-mile section of U.S. 219 between Somerset and Meyersdale is approximately 3,500 vehicles per day. The majority of the traffic on U.S. 219 is diverted from parallel north south routes such as Garrett Shortcut Road and old SR 219 (Berlin Plank Road). An example is the traffic on the Garrett Shortcut Road (SR 2031) prior to completion of the new portion of U.S. 219 was over 2,000 vehicles per day and following completion the traffic was approximately 500 vehicles per day. Completion of U.S. 219 or providing for a direct connection to the PA Turnpike will not address congestion or safety issues at the tunnel.

Complete new tunnel to not upset water table sources: There will be localized ground water impacts for all of the alternatives. The project team will continue to conduct additional studies locally throughout the design and construction of the project to ensure water sources are not interrupted.

Tunnel is safest option for travelers and weather: While tunnels are safe, an open cut has additional safety advantages:

- The cut alternative has a full width shoulder that provides multiple benefits:
 - a recovery area exists if a driver errantly departs from a lane,
 - should a vehicle become disabled the shoulder provides an area of refuge
 - drivers have additional space if they are adjacent to a distracted driver
- Tunnels require periodic maintenance including:
 - removal of snow buildup in the tunnel that requires traffic to be stopped (potential for rear end collision)
 - equipment maintenance like replacing lights that may require bidirectional traffic in one tube (potential of head on collision)
- Standard speed reduction required for tunnels, 70 MPH to 55 MPH (potential for rear end collision).

The tunnel options do provide a short duration where the driver is not exposed to adverse weather conditions, 31 seconds for the Gray Tunnel for example, but the previously discussed issues have a larger impact on driver safety. The overall crash rate for the Turnpike while approaching or departing the Allegheny Tunnels is more than two times greater than the statewide crash rate for similar interstate segments in PA. It was noted the safety advantage that tunnels gain by offering motorists protection from adverse weather is offset by the increased number of accidents that are unique to a tunnel and/or its operation.

The elevation difference between the existing Turnpike roadway and the proposed gray cut is approximately 224 feet. It is expected that either option (Rehabilitation/new tunnel or Gray Cut alternative) will experience very similar weather conditions for the area. Based on the Gray Tunnel length (3,045') and increased length of the Gray Tunnel alternative (335') as compared to the Gray Cut, drivers will only experience 31 seconds less of adverse weather in a tunnel. The safety advantage that tunnels gain by offering motorists protection from adverse weather is offset by the increased number of accidents that are unique to a tunnel and/or its operation. The PTC is continually updating its systems to include the most modern facilities for sensing weather conditions across the Turnpike. This would include a variety of methods for sensing weather conditions and changing operations in response, such as the use of changeable message signs and traveler advisory radio in the vicinity of the Allegheny Mountains. Weather related accidents are not completely avoidable, but today's technologies allow for monitoring of weather and road conditions and alerting travelers to those conditions in real time. Traditional methods continue to be used to mitigate for severe

weather conditions as they occur. For snow and freezing roadway conditions, the PTC regularly applies deicing and antiskid materials, as well as plowing. These conditions including fog can also be mitigated in part by warning systems or the posting of mandatory lower speeds.

Will affect farming by way of water, climate: The Gray Cut Alternative will impact approximately 1 acre of farmland directly. A National Pollution Discharge Elimination Systems Permit will be required for the project to address stormwater runoff and drainage. The alternatives developed for the study will utilize new stormwater systems that will collect runoff from large portions of the roadway directing it into stormwater facilities that will be required to meet MS4 provisions, providing greater protection than currently exists. There are ten natural gaps in the Allegheny Ridge within a 20-mile radius of the project. The average depth of the natural gaps is approximately 265 ft and have an average top width of 3,200 ft. The gap created by the cut will have a slightly smaller depth compared to other existing gaps in the ridge with a substantially narrower top width. The project is not anticipated to affect the regional weather patterns. Please see response above concerning weather.

Environmental, aesthetic and wildlife issues: The project team has evaluated many alternatives over the course of the project. There were no Project alternatives that completely avoided environmental impacts, met all Project purpose and needs, and provided for reasonable costs. Every alternative studied includes areas of cut. The tunnel alternatives consist of a noticeably shorter length of tunnel as compared to the existing Allegheny Tunnel. The intact ridge length will not be the same as today with any of the alternatives. With regard to environmental impacts, the Gray Cut has lower wetland impacts compared to the other alternatives and does not impact the travel corridor of federal and state threatened and endangered bats that all of the northern alternatives impact. One of the reasons the Gray Cut is proposed to move forward is the proximity to the existing Turnpike utilizing previously disturbed area and the edge habitat created by the existing turnpike thus reducing the amount of interior forest impact as much as possible. Each tunnel alternative consists of cut and fill along with a shorter length of tunnel (compared to the existing Allegheny Tunnel). Each of the tunnel alternatives are located within more of the interior forest, further away from the existing Turnpike. While each alternative contains a tunnel that keeps a smaller length of contiguous forest intact (than the existing tunnel) it is creating additional edge habitat deeper within the forest than the Gray Cut alternative. The project team has proposed one overhead wildlife crossing 100 feet wide and 200 feet long and two large bridges over stream valleys to serve as underpasses to facilitate north south wildlife movement. The wildlife crossing is located south of the existing Allegheny Tunnel. This location was chosen as it provides a crossing point for wildlife that is in line with the existing section of contiguous forest area that is found over the Allegheny Tunnel. This crossing, in conjunction with the structures over the Unnamed Tributary to Stonycreek River and the Raystown Branch of Juniata River, are intended to provide locations along the new section of highway that will allow for the safe movement of wildlife. As the project continues, the project team will coordinate with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Pennsylvania Game Commission to improve the design of wildlife crossings.

The project team will continue coordination with the environmental agencies throughout the design and construction of the project. Additionally, the Turnpike Commission is responsible to follow state and federal environmental regulations necessary to obtain permits prior to construction including PA Code Chapter 105, Section 401 and 404 of the Clean Water Act, Section 7 of the Endangered Species act and the National Historic Preservation Act to mention a few.

It is the PTC's intent to revegetate as much disturbance as is feasible and possible. The steeper area of cut will be left as exposed rock. The gap created will be similar in size to other existing gaps in the ridge. There is a parallel ridge 4,000 ft to the east of the Allegheny Ridge in the location of the project. The eastern ridge in the area of the cut is approximately the same elevation as the Allegheny Ridge at the location of the cut. This eastern ridge will limit the view from the east to the limits of this project. The impacts to the view of the ridge line from the west will be minimized by the parallel eastern ridge.

There are ten natural gaps in the Allegheny Ridge within a 20-mile radius of the project. The average depth of the natural gaps is approximately 265 ft and have an average top width of 3,200 ft. The gap created by the cut will have a slightly smaller depth compared to other existing gaps in the ridge with a substantially narrower top width.

Why doesn't your company use 1940's technology and reason with new 2020 technology for a new tunnel:

The project team has evaluated many alternatives and construction techniques over the course of the project. There were no Project alternatives that completely avoided environmental impacts, met all Project purpose and needs, and provided for reasonable costs. The Gray Cut Alternative was selected as the Project Preferred Alternative as it best balances all the operational, safety, cost, and environmental considerations that are components of the Project.

Carl Walker Metzgar, Member
69th Legislative District

Harrisburg Office:
111 Ryan Office Building
P.O. Box 202069
Harrisburg, PA 17120-2069
Phone: (717) 783-8756
Fax: (717) 782-2911

Somerset Office:
301 Georgian Place
Somerset, PA 15501
Phone: (814) 443-4230
Fax: (814) 443-3866

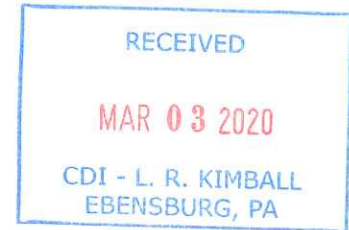


House of Representatives
Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
Harrisburg

Hyndman Office:
158 Washington Street
Hyndman, PA 15545
Phone: (814) 842-3362
Fax: (814) 842-3367

Windber Office:
1605 Graham Ave.
Windber, PA 15963
Phone: (814) 467-4011
Fax: (814) 467-4012

February 26, 2020



Pennsylvania Turnpike Commission,

I'm writing in opposition to the Allegheny Tunnel Transportation Improvement Program proposal creating an "open cut". This cut would be one of the largest transportation cuts in the country and would have many devastating impacts to wildlife and the environment generally. It would destroy hundreds of acres of forested mountaintop, and irreparably damage the eastern divide.

This mountain is a treasure and has been part of the heritage of our people for generations. There is no less value to this geographic feature than any other acre in this great nation. To assail it is to assail the very spirit of our people. The original builders of the Turnpike did their best to conform symbiotically with the terrain and I ask that you continue that same tradition by maintaining the existing tunnels and adding another if necessary.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Carl Walker Metzgar".

Carl Walker Metzgar
Representative 69th Legislative District

House of Representatives

COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
HARRISBURG

CARL WALKER METZGAR, MEMBER

P.O. BOX 202069

HARRISBURG, PA 17120-2069

CERTIFIED MAIL



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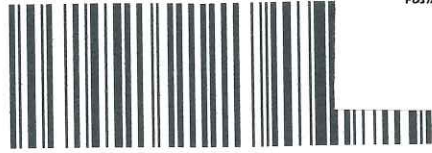


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Kimballs

Pennsylvania Turnpike
Attn: Allegheny Tunnel Project
615 West Highland Avenue
Ebensburg, PA 15931-1048

*Att 2/28/20
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3-14*

Carl Walker Metzgar Letter February 26, 2020
Responses to issues identified

Project would create one of the largest transportation cuts in the country: While 249 feet of cut is large, it is dwarfed by the “Pikeville Cut-Through” near Pikeville, KY with a depth of over 520 feet, and another larger cut in closer proximity (34 miles southeast) is the I-68 cut through Sideling Hill with depth of 340 feet.

Gray Cut Alternative would destroy hundreds of acres of forested mountaintop: The project team has evaluated many alternatives over the course of the project. There were no Project alternatives that completely avoided environmental impacts, met all Project purpose and needs, and provided for reasonable costs. Every alternative studied includes areas of cut. The tunnel alternatives consist of a noticeably shorter length of tunnel as compared to the existing Allegheny Tunnel. The intact ridge length will not be the same as today with any of the alternatives. With regard to environmental impacts, the Gray Cut has lower wetland impacts compared to the other alternatives and does not impact the travel corridor of federal and state threatened and endangered bats that all of the northern alternatives impact. One of the reasons the Gray Cut is proposed to move forward is the proximity to the existing Turnpike utilizing previously disturbed area and the edge habitat created by the existing turnpike thus reducing the amount of interior forest impact as much as possible. Each tunnel alternative consists of cut and fill along with a shorter length of tunnel (compared to the existing Allegheny Tunnel). Each of the tunnel alternatives are located within more of the interior forest, further away from the existing Turnpike. While each alternative contains a tunnel that keeps a smaller length of contiguous forest intact (than the existing tunnel) it is creating additional edge habitat deeper within the forest than the Gray Cut alternative. The project team has proposed one overhead wildlife crossing and two structures over stream valleys to serve as underpasses to facilitate north south wildlife movement. As the project continues, the project team will coordinate with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Pennsylvania Game Commission to improve the design of wildlife crossings.

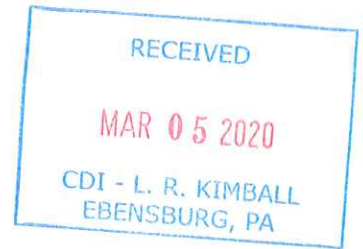
The existing Turnpike roadway crosses over both the Raystown Branch of the Juniata River and the Unnamed Tributary to the Stonycreek River (including multiple tributaries of each), as well as several wetland systems. For example, the Turnpike currently uses deicing agent on the roadway that crosses the above noted aquatic resources. All alternatives (cut and tunnel) will cross these same resources and require the use of deicing material in the winter. However, the alternatives developed for the study will utilize new stormwater systems that will collect runoff from large portions of the roadway directing it into stormwater facilities that will be required to meet MS4 provisions, providing greater protection than currently exists. Also, water encountered from excavation will be captured and treated as necessary prior to release to surface water systems. A thin section analysis on limited borings confirmed the presence of pyrite. Most of the pyrite occurs as microscopic grains, some of which is framboidal. It should be noted the pyrite evaluated via Scanning Electron Microscope (SEM) does not originate from hydrothermal solutions as secondary depositions as was the case in the Sky-Top Investigation near State College regarding the I-99 corridor. Appropriate studies will be completed as the project moves forward into final design to identify acidic problematic area such that design can minimize or eliminate the risk.

The project team will continue coordination with the environmental agencies throughout the design and construction of the project. Additionally, the Turnpike Commission is responsible to follow state and federal environmental regulations necessary to obtain permits prior to construction including PA Code Chapter 105, Section 401 and 404 of the Clean Water Act, Section 7 of the Endangered Species act and the National Historic Preservation Act to mention a few.

It is the PTC's intent to revegetate as much disturbance as is feasible and possible. The steeper area of cut will be left as exposed rock. There is a parallel ridge 4,000 ft to the east of the Allegheny Ridge in the location of the project. The eastern ridge in the area of the cut is approximately the same elevation as the Allegheny Ridge at the location of the cut. This eastern ridge will limit the view from the east to the limits of this project. The impacts to the view of the ridge line from the west will be minimized by the parallel eastern ridge.

There are ten natural gaps in the Allegheny Ridge within a 20-mile radius of the project. The average depth of the natural gaps is approximately 265 ft and have an average top width of 3,200 ft. The gap created by the cut will have a slightly smaller depth compared to other existing gaps in the ridge with a substantially narrower top width.

Rehabilitation of existing tunnel with construction of additional tunnel south of the existing tunnel: Multiple hybrid variations of using one or both of the existing tubes were evaluated. Several of the variations included performing major rehabilitation on the existing tubes for use of westbound traffic, build a new 3-lane tube for eastbound traffic and address the substandard curve to the east of the existing tunnel, or rehabilitating just the southern 2-lane tube, abandon the northern tube, build an additional 2-lane and a 3-lane tube and flatten the substandard curve. Both variations have two issues. The first is the 4-lane westbound traffic would be required to diverge east of the new tunnels and then merge west of the tunnels, while this is possible it creates a less than desirable traffic pattern. Second and more critical issue is that both variations require the revising of the existing curve east of the tunnel to meet the minimum curve radius. The required minimum radius and maintaining the elevation of the existing tunnel would have a major impact to the area of geotechnical remediation associated with the Gray Cut Alternative. The impacted area of the ancient landslide would be substantially larger for the alternatives using the existing tube(s) than compared to the Gray Cut Alternative. This would result in increased forest removal and potentially additional aquatic resource impacts.



Public Plans Display – January 16, 2020

COMMENT FORM

Please Provide Your Comments or Suggestions:

The exhibits for each of the alternatives were very well done and the CDI-Kimball and PTC personnel were very knowledgeable of the project and impacts.

As a former Kimball geologist who worked on this project back in the 1990's, I understand some of these issues. I prefer the "yellow Tunnel alternative". I understand that it is expensive; however, mitigating the landslide risk at the gray alternative is also very costly and have to be done prior to the roadway work. Which alternative will expose acid producing strata? and how thick is it? Will AMD potential be the same for a cut or tunnel option?

All the best on this project. -Joan Hawk

Please mail or fax this form to:

L.R. Kimball
Attn: Tammy Sherwin
615 West Highland Avenue
Ebensburg, PA 15931

Fax: 814-472-7712

All responses must be received by February 27, 2020

oops! I apologize.

Joan Hawk Comment Form March 5, 2020
Response to issues identified

Prefer the Yellow Tunnel Alternative: The project team has evaluated many alternatives over the course of the project. There were no Project alternatives that completely avoided environmental impacts, met all Project purpose and needs, and provided for reasonable costs. Every alternative studied includes areas of cut. The tunnel alternatives consist of a noticeably shorter length of tunnel as compared to the existing Allegheny Tunnel. The intact ridge length will not be the same as today with any of the alternatives. With regard to environmental impacts, the Gray Cut has lower wetland impacts compared to the other alternatives and does not impact the travel corridor of federal and state threatened and endangered bats that all of the northern alternatives, including the Yellow Tunnel, impact. One of the reasons the Gray Cut is proposed to move forward is the proximity to the existing Turnpike utilizing previously disturbed area and the edge habitat created by the existing turnpike thus reducing the amount of interior forest impact as much as possible. Each tunnel alternative consists of cut and fill along with a shorter length of tunnel (compared to the existing Allegheny Tunnel). Each of the tunnel alternatives are located within more of the interior forest, further away from the existing Turnpike. While each alternative contains a tunnel that keeps a smaller length of contiguous forest intact (than the existing tunnel) it is creating additional edge habitat deeper within the forest than the Gray Cut alternative.

Mitigating the landslide risk at the gray alternatives is also very costly and has to be done prior to roadwork: The cost of the slide remediation is already included in the cost of the gray alternatives (both cut and tunnel). The Gray cut still remains the most cost effective compared to the remaining alternatives. The PTC is intending to complete the slide remediation in phases and not all at once due to removal of forest area (bat habitat). The phasing of the remediation will allow for tree removal in smaller areas over two years giving the bats a chance to acclimate to the situation.

Which alternative will produce acid producing strata: From the preliminary analysis, it is expected that all alternatives will produce acid bearing strata. A thin section analysis on limited borings confirmed the presence of pyrite. Most of the pyrite occurs as microscopic grains, some of which is framboidal. It should be noted the pyrite evaluated via Scanning Electron Microscope (SEM) does not originate from hydrothermal solutions as secondary depositions as was the case in the Sky-Top Investigation near State College regarding the I-99 corridor. Appropriate studies will be completed as the project moves forward into final design to identify acidic problematic area such that design can minimize or eliminate the risk.

Will Acid Mine Drainage (AMD) potential be the same for a cut or tunnel option: Each type of alternative includes cut and fill. The extent of cut associated with a tunnel option would be less than an open cut option. All alternatives contain the potential for AMD. Additional studies will be conducted as the project moves into final design to identify areas of concern. Water encountered from excavation will be captured and treated as necessary prior to release to surface water systems.