



**DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY**  
PITTSBURGH DISTRICT, CORPS OF ENGINEERS  
WILLIAM S. MOORHEAD FEDERAL BUILDING  
1000 LIBERTY AVENUE  
PITTSBURGH, PA 15222-4186

REPLY TO

May 14, 2009

Operations Division  
Regulatory Branch  
**2007-1479**

David P. Willis  
Pennsylvania Turnpike Commission  
P.O. Box 67676  
Harrisburg, PA 17106-7676

Dear Mr. Willis

Enclosed for your records is a copy of the executed Record of Decision entitled:

RECORD OF DECISION U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS, PITTSBURGH DISTRICT  
FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT THE SOUTHERN BELTWAY  
TRANSPORTATION PROJECT I-79 TO THE MON/FAYETTE EXPRESSWAY  
WASHINGTON COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA.

If you have any questions, please contact Kevin E. Gabig at (412) 395-7248.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Scott A. Hans".

Scott A. Hans  
Chief, Regulatory Branch

Enclosures

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**RECORD OF DECISION  
U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS, PITTSBURGH DISTRICT  
FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT  
SOUTHERN BELTWAY TRANSPORTATION PROJECT  
I-79 TO MON/FAYETTE EXPRESSWAY  
WASHINGTON COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA**

**APRIL 7, 2009**

**INTRODUCTION**

The origins of a Southern Beltway around the City of Pittsburgh can be traced as far back as the 1950s. Throughout the 1970s, an Allegheny County Beltway was part of the Regional Transportation Plan adopted by the Southwestern Pennsylvania Regional Planning Commission (SPRPC), now known as the Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission (SPC), the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the ten-county Pittsburgh region. However, as competition for the transportation funds intensified in the late 1970s, SPRPC's plans were refocused on upgrading existing arterials. Through the 1980s, SPRPC's Regional Transportation Plan included a series of upgraded arteries across the area south of Pittsburgh.

The concept of a partial Southern Beltway resurfaced in 1988 as a part of the *Pennsylvania Turnpike Commission's Mon/Fayette Expressway Corridor Feasibility Study*, which included a connection from the proposed Expressway, located generally along the Monongahela River, to I-79. In 1989-90, SPRPC then conducted a feasibility study for a more extensive Southern Beltway connecting the Pittsburgh International Airport (PIA) and the Pennsylvania Turnpike to the east of the City of Pittsburgh. The study concluded that a Southern Beltway was feasible from both an environmental and engineering standpoint. However, the feasibility study did not conclude whether an "inner" or "outer" corridor should be pursued for a more extensive Southern Beltway.

In 1993, the SPRPC concluded that a dual strategy of an 'inner' and "outer" beltway would meet a number of planning goals. The "outer" beltway was to be pursued by the PA Turnpike Commission to improve regional connectivity, orderly growth and development, access, and freight movements.

The purpose of the Southern Beltway Transportation Project from I-79 to the Mon/Fayette Expressway is to provide transportation mobility and safety improvements by drawing traffic onto a modern transportation facility, relieve further congestion, support and serve economic

development plans, and improve east/west access and mobility in the circumferential corridor south of the City of Pittsburgh. The Southern Beltway Transportation Project between I-79 and the Mon/Fayette Expressway would be developed to meet the needs identified within the project area and to be compatible with local, regional, and national planning efforts. The intent is to improve access for employment, industry, truck traffic, emergency services, and future growth areas by providing a modern transportation facility that enhances transportation continuity locally and regionally.

During the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) from December 14, 2007 through February 8, 2008, a Public Hearing was held on January 24, 2008 at the Canon-McMillan High School to present the Green Alternative Option 1A in Section 1 (west) and the Tan-Red Alternative in Section 2 (east) as the Recommended Preferred Alternative and provide the opportunity for public participation and comments on the DEIS.

Three hundred eleven (311) people attended the Public Hearing. The Hearing included a formal presentation and testimony, as well as an open house area for the public to review supporting documentation and project plans of the alternatives considered, detailed plans of the Recommended Preferred Alternative, preliminary right-of-way information, farmland impacts, and the DEIS.

Comments were received in several different formats, including individual letters, private testimony to a stenographer, public oral testimony, comment forms, and written testimony. Comments were received from federal and state agencies; local government officials; homeowners associations; a church; and private citizens.

A Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) was circulated for review on November 14, 2008, with a closing date for review on December 15, 2008. A copy of the FEIS was filed with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency on November 4, 2008. A Public Hearing was held on January 24, 2008 at Canon-McMillan High School to present the Preferred Alternative and obtain public input. The FEIS addresses public and agency comments received on the DEIS. Volume III of the FEIS includes the comments and testimony received on the DEIS during the public comment period and also provides responses to the comments and testimony.

## **DECISION**

The project was developed in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), 40 CFR Parts (1500-1508); the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers regulations (33 CFR Part 230), the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (36 CFR Part 800) and other relevant federal and

state requirements. The project was developed in compliance with all applicable Pennsylvania laws.

The Selected Alternative is the alternative which best balances the social, cultural, and natural resource impacts, while considering local planning goals and objectives as well as public and agency opinion and coordination. An evaluation of impacts for each of the proposed alternatives was conducted and the results were presented in the DEIS and FEIS. Based upon the balancing of impacts and coordination undertaken for the Southern Beltway Transportation Project I-79 to the Mon/Fayette Expressway, the following specific reasons were identified for advancing the Green Alternative Option 1A in Section 1 and the Tan-Red Alternative in Section 2 as the Preferred Alternative:

### **SECTION 1 ALTERNATIVES**

- **The Green Alternative Option 1A would have the least residential displacements.** The Green Alternative Option 1A would displace 39 residential units while the Green Alternative Option 1B would displace 107 residential units. The Purple Alternative would displace 161 residential units while the Tan Alternative would displace 151 residential units.
- **The Green Alternative Option 1A would have the least business displacements.** The Green Alternative Option 1A would displace two businesses while the Green Alternative Option 1B would displace four businesses. The Purple Alternative would displace 12 businesses and the Tan Alternative would displace 13 businesses.
- **The Green Alternative Option 1A would have a lower total cost.** The Green Alternative Option 1A would cost an estimated 7 percent less than the Green Alternative Option 1B and between 37 and 27 percent less than the Purple and Tan Alternatives, respectively for the Year of Expenditure (Year 2012). The Green Alternative Option 1A would cost an estimated \$356 million and the Green Alternative Option 1B would cost an estimated \$383 million in the Year of Expenditure, each with a total length of 6.1 and 6.4 miles, respectively. The Purple Alternative would cost an estimated \$568 million and the Tan Alternative would cost an estimated \$487 million in Year of Expenditure, each with a total length of 9.4 miles and 10.3 miles, respectively. A more complete cost estimate is provided in Appendix E of the FEIS. Since the Green Alternative Option 1A is shorter than Option 1B and the Purple and Tan Alternatives, it would require between 5 and 30 percent less pavement to construct and maintain.

- **The Green Alternative would have the least impact to productive agricultural land.**  
 The Green Alternative Option 1A or Option 1B would both impact the same seven farm operators and the same 31 hectares (76 acres) of productive agricultural land. The Purple Alternative would impact 15 farm operators and 54 hectares (133 acres) of productive agricultural land and the Tan Alternative would impact 14 farm operators and 47 hectares (115 acres) of productive agricultural land.
- **The Green Alternative would require the least culverting of streams.**  
 The Green Alternative Option 1A would require culverting 4,064 lineal feet of streams and the Green Alternative Option 1B would require culverting 3,534 lineal feet of streams, compared to the Purple Alternative (8,298 lineal feet of culverted streams) and the Tan Alternative (7,448 lineal feet of culverted streams).
- **The Green Alternative would have the least impact to coal reserves.**  
 Either Option 1A or Option 1B of the Green Alternative would have less impact on coal reserves than either the Purple or Tan Alternatives. The majority of coal reserves in the Section 1 area are in the southern portion of the study area. Either the Tan or Purple Alternative would require purchasing a larger amount of support coal to preclude the possibility of future subsidence to the facility. Purchasing of support coal would also restrict future mining operations in the area.
- **The Green Alternative would impact the least area of forested land.**  
 The Green Alternative Option 1A would impact 200 acres of forested land and the Green Alternative Option 1B would impact 175 acres of forested land. The Purple Alternative would impact 334 acres of forested land while the Tan Alternative would impact 260 acres of forested land.
- **The Green Alternative would have lower traffic impacts during construction.**  
 Since the Purple and Tan Alternatives both utilize a portion of I-79, construction activities would result in moderate to high traffic impacts respectively, during construction. The Green Alternative does not utilize the I-79 corridor and would have lower traffic impacts during construction.

The following is a comparison of the Green Alternative Option 1A and Green Alternative Option 1B and the various issues considered in identifying the Preferred Alternative in Section 1. Common points of comparison were established at Sta. 1170+00 and Sta. 1265+00 for evaluation purposes. Impacts outside of these stations are identical for either the Green Alternative Option 1A or Green Alternative Option 1B:

## Natural Resources

**Canonsburg Lake** – a 138 acre site, including a 76 acre impoundment, earthen gravity dam, and two boat launch/access areas. The dam (Alcoa Dam) was built in 1941 and the property was purchased by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania in 1958. The property is managed by the PA Fish & Boat Commission (PFBC) for boating, fishing and passive recreation activities. Fish species that are stocked in the lake include trout, channel catfish and muskellunge. The lake also has a high population of largemouth bass.

Option 1A would require a bridge crossing over the southernmost portion of the Canonsburg Lake property, within a backwater area of the lake. Bridge piers could be located on land, without any permanent impacts to the recreational boating and fishing aspects of the resource. A total of 11.52 acres (4.73 acres of cut/fill, 4.60 acres of aerial easement, 0.14 acre of pier footings and 2.05 acres of additional right-of-way) would be required from the lake property. Noise levels are projected to increase by five to 13 decibels within the PFBC property, north of U.S. Route 19 with Option 1A, which exceeds the Noise Abatement Criteria (NAC). During construction, portions of the lake property would be temporarily closed to the public or restricted for safety purposes. Mitigation measures, commensurate with the project impacts, would be implemented to fully compensate the PFBC for project-related impacts. Required right-of-way would be obtained from the PFBC by normal acquisition procedures. Through impact minimization and mitigation measures, an overall benefit to the Canonsburg Lake facility would occur.

Option 1B would not require the acquisition of any lake property and would not have any direct impacts to the open water portions of Canonsburg Lake. No mitigation would be implemented for Canonsburg Lake for Option 1B, therefore no benefit to the public recreation area would occur. The bridge crossings over Little Chartiers Creek and the interchange would be visible from portions of the PFBC property. Noise levels are projected to increase by seven to nine decibels within the PFBC property west of Little Chartiers Creek with Option 1B, which would not approach or exceed the NAC.

**Little Chartiers Creek** – a trout-stocked tributary to Canonsburg Lake.

Option 1A would span Little Chartiers Creek with the main lake crossing structure with no other permanent impacts to the stream. Due to the removal of the bridge structure on Galley Road, the 100-year floodplain elevation would decrease south of U.S. Route 19 and also decrease south of Galley Road.

Option 1B would require four additional bridge crossings of Little Chartiers Creek; two of which would be lower-level crossings for the interchange ramps. Due to the removal of the bridge structure on Galley Road, the 100-year floodplain elevation would decrease south of U.S. Route 19; however the 100-year floodplain elevation would increase less than 1-foot south of Galley Road.

### Stream impacts

Within the common points of comparison, Option 1A would result in 2,044 lineal feet of culverted streams and 80 lineal feet of stream loss.

Within the common points of comparison, Option 1B would result in 1,514 lineal feet of culverted streams and 400 lineal feet of stream loss.

### Wetlands

Within the common points of comparison, Option 1A would impact 18 wetlands, totaling 2.7 acres.

Within the common points of comparison, Option 1B would impact 11 wetlands, totaling 0.6 acre.

### **Residential Displacements**

Glencannon Community – a residential community within North Strabane Township consisting of approximately 500 homes, including single-family, individually-owned townhouses, and apartments. An active Homeowners Association maintains the community duck pond, walking trails, swimming pool, and other private recreational facilities.

Within the common points of comparison, Option 1A would displace 5 residences; however, none of these impacts would be in the Glencannon community. Community cohesion in Glencannon would not be impacted with Option 1A. Although noise levels are projected to increase by two to nine decibels in Glencannon with Option 1A, the projected noise increase would not approach or exceed the NAC. Construction related impacts would be minor.

Within the common points of comparison, Option 1B would displace 34 residences, 26 of which would be in the community of Glencannon. The community duck pond and



walking trails would be impacted by Option 1B. As stated in PennDOT's Community Impact Assessment Policy Guidelines, impacts to community cohesion occur when the quality of life and/or changes in land use are impacted. Based on the responses received from the August 1 and 2, 2005 Public Meetings, a majority of the Glencannon residents were opposed to Option 1B. A large portion of the community would be temporarily cut off from the remainder of the community during construction of the bridge crossing. Noise levels are projected to increase by nine to 14 decibels in Glencannon and exceed the NAC. Some noise impacts may not be able to be mitigated due to the bridge structure. Therefore, community cohesion would be affected with the addition of a new bridge structure located over and adjacent to the private recreational facilities and between the residential areas of the community.

### **Community Facilities**

Waterdam Evangelical Free Church – located on Galley Road, this is the only church of this denomination in Washington County.

Option 1A would have no direct impact to the Waterdam Evangelical Free Church.

Option 1B would displace the Waterdam Evangelical Free Church and its support structures including the parsonage and youth building.

### **Business Displacements**

Two business displacements, Managanas Painting and PA American Water are common to both Option 1A and Option 1B. These business displacements would affect a total of 106 employees.

Option 1A would not impact any additional businesses.

Option 1B would also displace the Ace Hardware business located in Waterdam Commons, which would affect 25 employees and the Lifetime Landscape Supply, which would affect seven employees.

### **Ongoing Developments**

Foxchase Residential Development (under construction) – a 111 unit residential development, consisting of 98 acres in North Strabane Township that includes townhouses, patio homes and single-family lots. Currently, there are 40 single and

multifamily residential units constructed, infrastructure is in place, and the remaining building lots are for sale.

Option 1A would avoid a major impact to the Foxchase residential development. Approximately 16 acres of open green space would need to be acquired with Option 1A for realignment of McDowell Road.

Option 1B would directly impact approximately 41 acres of the development, including 17 acres of green space. Approximately 33 single family home sites, 27 patio home sites, and 18 townhouse sites would be directly impacted while 19 additional single family home sites would be landlocked and inaccessible with Option 1B. Option 1B would impact 97 of the 111 planned units.

Concord Green Residential Development (under construction) – a 162 unit residential development, consisting of 61 acres in North Strabane Township that includes townhouses, patio homes and single-family lots. Currently, there are 40 multifamily residential units constructed, development infrastructure is in place, and the remaining building lots are for sale.

Option 1A would directly impact six existing multifamily units and an additional four proposed multifamily units.

Option 1B would directly impact six existing multifamily units and an additional 20 proposed multifamily units.

## **Local Tax Base**

### North Strabane Township

Option 1A supports an increase in the tax base in North Strabane Township by minimizing impacts to existing and ongoing developments.

Option 1B would impact 41 additional residential properties and 97 (Foxchase) residential home sites that are constructed or planned for construction within the next 3 years. North Strabane Township is opposed to Option 1B due to its projected effects on the local tax base resulting from displacement of existing and ongoing developments.

## **Project Cost**

### Construction Cost

Estimated total construction cost for Option 1A would be approximately \$183 million in 2007 dollars. A more complete cost estimate, including Year of Expenditure costs, was provided in the FEIS.

Estimated total construction cost for Option 1B would be approximately \$189 million in 2007 dollars. The additional \$6 million is primarily due to the longer bridge structure spanning U.S. Route 19 and the four additional structures spanning Little Chartiers Creek. A more complete cost estimate, including Year of Expenditure costs, was provided in the FEIS.

Based on a comparison of Green Alternative Option 1A and Green Alternative Option 1B, and evaluation of the public feedback obtained at the January 24, 2008 Public Hearing, the following points support the Green Alternative Option 1A as the Preferred Alternative in Section 1:

**The Green Alternative Option 1A would affect the Canonsburg Lake recreational property, but it would include mitigation that would fully compensate for the impact to the property and result in an overall benefit to the facility.**

The Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission agree that minimization and mitigation would fully compensate for all impacts due to the Green Alternative Option 1A and result in an overall benefit to the Canonsburg Lake facility.

**The Green Alternative Option 1A would have less residential impacts in the community of Glencannon.**

The Green Alternative Option 1A would have no residential displacements in the community of Glencannon while the Green Alternative Option 1B would have 26 residential displacements in Glencannon.

**The Green Alternative Option 1A would have less community facility impacts than the Green Alternative Option 1B.**

The Green Alternative Option 1A would not impact the Waterdam Evangelical Free Church. The Green Alternative Option 1B would displace the church and support structures including the parsonage and youth building.

**The Green Alternative Option 1A would have less business displacements than the Green Alternative Option 1B.**

The Green Alternative Option 1A would not displace the Ace Hardware business which has 25 employees nor the Lifetime Landscape Supply which has seven employees. The Green Alternative Option 1B would displace these businesses.

**The Green Alternative Option 1A would have less impact to Little Chartiers Creek than the Green Alternative Option 1B.**

Little Chartiers Creek is a trout stocked stream which is the primary supply of water for Canonsburg Lake. The Green Alternative Option 1A would cross Little Chartiers Creek with the main lake crossing structure while the Green Alternative Option 1B would require four additional bridges over the stream, two of which would be lower-level crossings for the interchange ramps. Green Alternative Option 1A would result in a lowering of the 100-year floodplain elevation along Little Chartiers Creek south of Galley Road while Option 1B would raise (less than 1-foot increase) the 100-year floodplain elevation along Little Chartiers Creek south of Galley Road.

**Green Alternative Option 1A is supported by the local municipality over the Green Alternative Option 1B.**

North Strabane Township officials have expressed strong opposition to the residential displacements in Glencannon and the impacts to the Foxchase development which is nearly half completed. The township officials are adamantly opposed to the Green Alternative Option 1B because of the impacts to these two communities and the resultant substantial impact on their local tax base.

**The Green Alternative Option 1A would have a lower construction cost and a lower total cost than the Green Alternative Option 1B.**

The estimated construction cost (2007 dollars) for the Green Alternative Option 1A is \$6 million less than the estimated construction cost for the Green Alternative Option 1B.

The total project cost for the Green Alternative Option 1A (2007 dollars) is \$24 million less than the total project cost for the Green Alternative Option 1B. A more complete cost estimate, including Year of Expenditure costs is provided in Appendix E of the FEIS.

**The Green Alternative Option 1A received substantial support during the Public Meetings.**

Strong support for the Green Alternative Option 1A was received during workshops and the Public Meetings held on August 1 and 2, 2005, while strong opposition to the Green Alternative Option 1B was received during these workshops and Public Meetings. The Green Alternative Option 1A received 317 comments supporting the Green Alternative Option 1A over Option 1B. Opposition to Option 1B was indicated in 242 form letters and 41 specific comments about Glencannon. During the Public Meetings, many commenters expressed their concerns about the negative impacts the Green Alternative Option 1B would have on the natural and socioeconomic environment in the area. There were also 12 objections to the crossing of Canonsburg Lake by the Green Alternative Option 1A.

**SECTION 2 ALTERNATIVES**

**The Tan-Red Alternative and the Tan Alternative would require fewer residential displacements than the Red Alternative.**

The Tan-Red Alternative would require 57 residential displacements and the Tan Alternative would require 56 residential displacements. The Red Alternative would require 66 residential displacements. Nottingham Township has also indicated that fewer potentially developable lots within their township would be impacted by the Tan-Red Alternative.

**The Tan-Red Alternative and the Red Alternative would have less impact to the Peters Creek floodplain.**

Both the Tan-Red Alternative and the Red Alternative would impact 3.1 acres of floodplain compared to 6.5 acres for the Tan Alternative.

**Nottingham Township supports the Tan-Red Alternative, but is opposed to the Red Alternative.**

On November 3, 2003, Nottingham Township approved their Resolution No. 9-2003 indicating their opposition to the Red Alternative. At a workshop with Nottingham Township officials on February 9, 2004, the Township officials indicated their support for the Tan-Red Alternative.

**The Tan-Red and Red Alternatives would impact the least area of rangeland.**

The Tan-Red and Red Alternatives would each impact 23.5 hectares (58 acres) of rangeland while the Tan Alternative would impact 36.4 hectares (90 acres) of rangeland.

**The Tan-Red Alternative would have less impact to productive agricultural land.**

The Tan-Red and Red Alternatives would each impact 32 hectares (79 acres) of productive agricultural land and would each affect ten farm operators. The Tan Alternative would affect eight farm operators, but would impact 36 hectares (90 acres) of productive agricultural land.

**The Tan-Red and Red Alternatives would have less impact to Agricultural Security Areas (ASA) and productive agricultural land in ASAs.**

The Tan-Red and Red Alternatives each would impact less ASA, 18 hectares (44-45 acres respectively), than the Tan Alternative, 32 hectares (80 acres) of ASAs. In addition, the Tan-Red and Red Alternatives each would impact approximately 15 hectares (37 acres) of productive agricultural land in ASAs while the Tan Alternative would impact 30 hectares (75 acres) of productive agricultural land in ASAs.

**SELECTED ALTERNATIVE**

The Green Alternative Option 1A in Section 1 and the Tan-Red Alternative in Section 2 (refer to Figure 5-1 of the FEIS) comprise the Selected Alternative based upon its ability to meet the identified project needs, meet engineering criteria, environmental impacts, input from the public and environmental resource agencies, and the above specific reasons.

**ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED**

A preliminary alternatives development and evaluation process was performed to define and analyze a broad range of transportation alternatives based on identified project needs. The preliminary alternatives were developed, analyzed, and specific alternatives were then advanced for detailed study based on the alternative's ability to meet the identified project needs, its impact on environmental features, and the consideration of public and agency input which was received. The alternatives considered for this project are described in Chapter 3 of the FEIS.

An Integrated Congestion Management System/Major Investment Study (CMS/MIS) Report was completed for all three Southern Beltway Transportation Projects in accordance with Joint Statewide and Metropolitan Planning Regulations issued November 29, 1993.

The following Alternatives were considered during the CMS/MIS and Preliminary Alternatives Analysis.

### **No-Build Alternative**

The No-Build Alternative would consist of taking no action to improve the transportation facilities within the corridor. The No-Build Alternative would not meet the project needs, but was advanced into detailed study as a baseline comparison for the other alternatives.

### **Congestion Management System (CMS) Strategies Alternative**

The Congestion Management System analysis was performed to determine if CMS strategies, such as improved transit, carpooling, etc., would eliminate the need for additional Single Occupancy Vehicle (SOV) capacity within the project area. More detailed information regarding the CMS analysis can be found in the *Integrated Congestion Management System Analysis and Major Investment Study, December 1996*. The CMS analysis concluded that the implementation of Congestion Management Strategies alone would not satisfy the need for additional highway capacity in the corridor. As a result, additional single occupancy vehicle capacity was studied and evaluated through a Major Investment Study.

### **Major Investment Study (MIS) Alternatives**

The MIS evaluated alternative transportation investments in attaining local, state, and national goals and objectives for the metropolitan area. The range of alternatives considered in the MIS can be found in the *Integrated Congestion Management System Analysis and Major Investment Study, December 1996*. An Exclusive Transitway Alternative on new right-of-way to provide for east-west circumferential travel was considered. An upgrade alternative (The Roadway Network Upgrade Alternative) consisting of various roadway improvements, referred to as 3R improvements (resurfacing, restoration, and rehabilitation) and four-lane upgrades, where feasible, was also developed and evaluated. The MIS concluded that the Exclusive Transitway Alternative and the Roadway Network Upgrade Alternative were not reasonable, since they did not meet the identified project needs. As a result, these alternatives were not studied in further detail.

The *Integrated Congestion Management System Analysis and Major Investment Study Report*, was endorsed by SPRPC (now SPC), in accordance with 23 CFR 450.318, through a Resolution of Endorsement No. 21-96, dated September 30, 1996 (provided in Appendix A of the FEIS). This resolution endorsed the design concept and scope of the New Toll Road Alternative for further study.

### **New Toll Road Alternatives**

In order to more clearly define the alternatives to be studied between I-79 and the Mon/Fayette Expressway, an engineering and environmental impact study was initiated. Within the project area, a point-of-access analysis was conducted to determine potential locations for new toll road connections along the project logical termini of I-79 and the Mon/Fayette Expressway (PA Turnpike 43). The analysis considered Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) guidelines for interchange spacing along limited access highways. The result of this analysis identified two new interchange locations along I-79 and one interchange location along the Mon/Fayette Expressway that would not affect the safe operation of existing interchanges along these transportation facilities. The following paragraph provides a brief description of the proposed interchange locations.

At the western terminus, there were two possible interchange locations. The first interchange could be situated between the existing Bridgeville and Southpointe interchanges along I-79. The second could be situated between the Southpointe and Canonsburg North interchanges along I-79. At the eastern terminus, there was only one possible interchange location. The new interchange could be located between the Elrama and PA Route 136 interchanges along the Mon/Fayette Expressway (see Figure E.S.-1).

Utilizing these interchange locations, preliminary alternatives were developed between I-79 and the Mon/Fayette Expressway. With the exception of the Blue Alternative, all of the other alternatives were divided into Section 1 and Section 2 (west and east) alternatives for study and evaluation purposes due to their common location near the center of the project area. The preliminary New Toll Road Alternatives included the following: Blue Alternative; Section 1 – Purple Alternative, Tan Alternative, Red Alternative, Green Alternative, and Orange Alternative; Section 2 – Orange Alternative, Red Alternative and Tan Alternative. The preliminary alternatives are presented on Figure E.S.-2.

Each of the New Toll Road Alternatives considered in detailed study would be a four-lane, limited access expressway. The mainline typical section for these alternatives consists of two 3.66 meter (12 foot) lanes in each direction, an 18.3 meter (60 foot) median, with inside shoulders of 2.44 meters (8 feet), and outside shoulders of 3.66 meters (12 feet). Each of the



New Toll Road Alternatives would share a common interchange with I-79 at the Southern Beltway U.S. 22 to I-79 interchange location between the existing Bridgeville and Southpointe interchanges. Along the Mon/Fayette Expressway, each of the alternatives would share the same interchange location with the Mon/Fayette Expressway.

Some of the major engineering considerations taken into account in developing the alternatives included interchange locations and layouts, traffic volumes and movements, abandoned mines and geology, and road, trail, and stream crossings. The engineering developed for each alternative provided the means of evaluating their environmental impact, as well as their ability to meet the project needs, improve the efficient movement of goods and services, relieve existing and future predicted roadway congestion, improve vehicular and pedestrian safety, increase roadway linkages between major highways, and provide transportation services to support economic development plans.

The evaluation of the New Toll Road Alternatives was presented to the resource agencies at the September 28, 1995 Special Agency Coordination Meeting (SACM), and to the local elected officials and public plans displays in October and November 1995.

The conclusion of the evaluation was that the Blue Alternative and Orange Alternatives (Sections 1 and 2) would not be studied in further detail due to environmental impacts, costs, and public and agency input.

Specific reasons why the Blue Alternative and Orange Alternatives (Section 1 and Section 2) were not advanced for detailed study include:

#### **BLUE ALTERNATIVE**

- Greatest number of business displacements
- Greatest impact to wetlands
- Direct impact to Brush Run, a perennial stream, and associated floodplains for a length of 4,054 meters (13,300 feet)
- Use nine Section 4(f) resources, including seven resources potentially eligible for the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) (four of which were later determined to be NRHP-eligible) and two public recreation areas, the Montour (Arrowhead) Trail and Venetia Park

## **ORANGE ALTERNATIVE SECTION 1**

The Orange Alternative, from U.S. Route 19 to Thomas and Eighty Four Road, when compared to either the Green Alternative or Red Alternative would have:

- 24 more residential displacement structures and one community facility
- Greater impacts to pending developments
- Greater impact to wetlands
- Greater impact to streams
- Impact two additional NRHP-potentially eligible historic resources (later determined to be NRHP-eligible)
- Substantially greater impacts to productive agricultural land and Agricultural Security Areas

## **ORANGE ALTERNATIVE SECTION 2**

- Severely impact current coal mining operations which would result in engineering problems and severe economic impacts to both the mining company and the Pennsylvania Turnpike Commission
- Greatest impact on wetlands and stream crossings of Section 2 Alternatives
- Greatest impact on productive farmland

The results of the preliminary alternatives analysis were documented in the *Preliminary Alternatives Analysis Report (PAA)* (October 2000). The report findings were presented to the resource agencies at the October 26, 2000 SACM. The PAA report was approved by PennDOT and FHWA on January 25, 2001.

At the December 5, 2002 SACM, it was recommended to present the Purple, Tan, and Green Alternatives (Option 1A and Option 1B) in Section 1 and the Tan and Red Alternatives in Section 2 in the detailed alternatives analysis section of the FEIS. Input received from public officials and local residents of Nottingham Township and evaluation of the Section 2 alternatives led to the development of the Tan-Red Alternative, which is a combination of the Tan and Red Alternatives in Section 2, whereby impacts are reduced (Figure E.S.-3). All three of the Section 1 alternatives begin at a common interchange point on I-79 and meet at a common location at the center of the project area near the North Strabane/Nottingham township boundary. A portion of the Purple and Tan Alternatives would utilize the existing I-79 corridor. The Green Alternative crosses Cecil and North Strabane townships in a southeasterly direction from I-79 to Section 2 of the project area. The Tan, Red, and Tan-Red Alternatives in Section 2 traverse Nottingham and Union townships in an east/west direction. The Tan Alternative generally follows the Venetia

Road (S.R. 1006) corridor while the Red Alternative is located more to the south and generally follows Munntown Road (T-673) and Mingo Church Road (S.R. 1061). The Tan-Red Alternative also follows the Venetia Road corridor to the west, but then swings south to join with the Red Alternative at Lutes Road (T-821). A more detailed discussion of the alternatives can be found in Chapter 3 - Alternatives.

Evaluations of the New Toll Road Alternatives involved the following activities:

- The major environmental features were identified and mapped using existing maps, photographs, files, and surveys.
- Preliminary alternatives were developed considering the environmental features identified from secondary sources (previously documented).
- Detailed field studies were conducted to verify and locate the environmental features and impacts associated with the preliminary alternatives chosen for detailed study.

The types of studies conducted for the environmental impact analysis of the alternatives for the I-79 to Mon/Fayette Expressway Project included:

- Traffic (Existing and Future)
- Soils, Geology, and Groundwater Resources
- Mining and Mineral Resources
- Surface Water Resources
- Floodplains and Flood Hazard Areas
- Wetlands
- Vegetation and Wildlife Resources
- Agricultural Resources
- Cultural Resources
- Social, Economic, and Land Use Resources
- Visual Resources
- Noise/Air Quality
- Municipal, Industrial, and Hazardous Waste Facilities
- Secondary and Cumulative Impacts
- Construction Impacts

## **MEASURES TO MINIMIZE HARM**

During the Transportation Project Development Process, refinements were made to the various alternatives to avoid or minimize impacts to sensitive environmental resources where possible. These refinements were reviewed by the regulatory and review agencies at the SACM held during the project development. When appropriate, design refinements were discussed with the public and public officials through the Public Meetings and other special interest group meetings.

All practical measures to minimize harm are incorporated in the project design. A final design management consultant retained by the PA Turnpike Commission will ensure that commitments made in the FEIS and this ROD are included in the final design plans. Design refinements will also be reviewed for environmental sensitivity. Periodic presentations will be made during final design at the SACM to obtain further input from the resource agencies. The final design management consultant will also ensure that all required environmental permits are obtained and permit conditions are incorporated into the construction contract documents.

Specific mitigation commitments are made in the FEIS, Chapter 4 (Environmental Consequences) and in this ROD as summarized below.

### **Traffic**

- Extensive coordination with the local municipalities and PennDOT District 11-0 and District 12-0 has occurred throughout the development of this project. Specific roadway treatments have been discussed with these entities to minimize any disruption in the transportation network and to improve deficiencies in the work area. In addition, representatives of PennDOT have participated in regular project status meetings, workshops, and have been provided project documentation.
- The following un-signalized intersections require signalization in the traffic design year (2012) in order to obtain an acceptable level of service, as well as to not degrade from the No-Build condition; and are illustrated in Figures 4-11 and 4-12 and the Plates in Volume II of the FEIS:
  - U.S. Route 19 (Washington Road) and S.R. 0019 Connector Road
  - Southern Beltway EB ON/OFF (Ramp I/J) and S.R. 0019 Connector Road
  - S.R. 0019 Connector Road and Galley Road
  - Mon/Fayette Expressway SB ON/OFF (Ramp U/T) and Finleyville-Elrama Road (S.R. 1006)

- Mon/Fayette Expressway NB ON/OFF (Ramp S/V) and Finleyville-Elrama Road (S.R. 1006)
  - Mon/Fayette Expressway NB ON/OFF (Ramp O/R) and PA Route 136
  - Mon/Fayette Expressway SB ON/OFF (Ramp P/Q) and PA Route 136
- The following un-signalized intersections require signalization in the design year (2030) in order to obtain an acceptable level of service, as well as to not degrade from the No-Build condition; and are illustrated in Figures 4-11 and 4-12 and the Plates in Volume II of the FEIS:
    - Southern Beltway WB ON/OFF (Ramp K/L) and S.R. 0019 Connector Road
- The following locations require lane additions or other modifications in order to obtain acceptable level of service, as well as to not degrade from the No-Build condition; and are illustrated in Figures 4-7 through 4-12 and the Plates in Volume II of the FEIS:
    - For the intersection of U.S. Route 19 and Waterdam Road in the design year (2012), and acceptable LOS “D” can be achieved by adding an additional through lane to the northbound and the southbound approaches.
    - For the intersection of U.S. Route 19 and McClelland Road in the design year (2012), and acceptable LOS “D” can be achieved by adding an additional through lane to the northbound and the southbound approaches.
    - For the intersection of U.S. Route 19 and Weavertown Road in the design year (2030), and acceptable LOS “D” can be achieved by adding an exclusive right turn lane for the southbound approach.
    - For the intersection of Mon/Fayette Expressway NB ON/OFF (Ramp O/R) and PA Route 136 at the Monongahela Interchange in the design year (2030), and acceptable LOS “C” can be achieved by adding a right turn lane in the westbound direction.

### **Soils, Geology and Groundwater Resources**

- Natural erosion of soils may be accelerated by roadway construction activities. Erosion and sedimentation control practices, such as silt fences, sediment basins, sediment traps, and seeding and mulching will be used to minimize the impact of soil erosion and sedimentation on streams and ponds. A detailed Soil Erosion and Sedimentation Control Plan (E&S Plan) will be prepared during final design in accordance with guidelines provided by the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT), Design Manual, Part 2, Highway Design. The E&S Plan will be included in the National Pollutant

Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Permit. The permit will meet the requirements of Chapters 102, 105, and 106 of PADEP's rules and regulations.

- During design and construction activities, the presence of acid producing material will be identified, selectively handled, buried, or encapsulated in impermeable materials away from natural drainage ways. Runoff from construction will be directed away from stream channels. All suspected mine drainage discharges will be addressed in the final design Geotechnical Engineering Report. Investigations and recommendations will be made for neutralization using approved PADEP methods prior to allowing water to enter equal or higher quality streams.
- The use of blasting may be required during construction. The control of blasting so as to prevent property and structure damage will be conducted according to PennDOT Publication 408. Pre-blast surveys (detailed inspections of structures within 1,000 feet of blasting operations) will be performed prior to any blasting operations to indicate areas of potential subsidence.
- A detailed subsurface exploration program will be performed on the Selected Alternative during final design to determine the actual bedrock characteristics and the potential presence of acid producing material. If geologic hazards, such as slope stability problems or landslide potential areas, are encountered in cut sections, additional geotechnical investigations and engineering design will be conducted to ensure stability and safe cut-slope angles. In fill sections, stability analysis will be conducted to maintain an acceptable factor of safety against slope failure. A variety of engineering measures will be considered during final design in order to minimize environmental impacts within the right-of-way. These measures include but are not limited to: the construction of walls, steepened slopes with drop zones (benches), and reinforcement embankments; the use of recommended special design standards; and appropriate handling or disposal requirements.
- The subsurface exploration program will identify areas where the interception of coal seams is anticipated. Exposed coal seams will be properly sealed to prevent the potential discharge of mine water into nearby streams. The engineering design for these seams will be considered during pre-final design efforts consistent with the findings and recommendations of the Geotechnical Engineering Report.
- A comprehensive investigation of all private groundwater well information will be conducted during final design to locate existing private wells. After final design, all existing private wells that may be impacted by the project will be identified and

monitored prior to construction in order to establish pre-construction water levels and conditions.

- If private wells are determined to be impacted, resulting in the loss or degradation of water quality or quantity, the wells will be replaced or redrilled to another water producing zone or remediated, as appropriate.
- Mine pools and any associated Acid Mine Drainage (AMD) encountered during construction activities will be addressed. Any AMD produced in cuts will be collected and treated during construction prior to discharge into existing watercourses. Corrosion protection will also be considered to protect any foundation elements or culverts that will be in contact with mine pools or AMD. Continued coordination with the PADEP will occur through final design and construction.

### **Mining and Mineral Resources**

- During final design activities, a surface and subsurface exploration program involving drilled borings and a comprehensive laboratory testing and sampling program, as appropriate, will be necessary to evaluate conditions in previous surface strip mines and to evaluate subsidence potential from past underground mining in the project area. This drilling program will be designed to locate areas of loose, uncompacted overburden, unstable soils, boundaries of highwalls and potential special handling or disposal requirements. Additionally, borings will be drilled to: sufficient depth to penetrate and sample materials above and below the Pittsburgh Coal bed; determine the depth, extent, and flooded status of deep mines, and; identify the existence of previous subsidence events. This information will be used to evaluate overburden structural integrity, fill slope stability, and assess the risk of future mine subsidence. Based upon risk assessment, the appropriate mitigation design may be to over-excavate and compact unconsolidated strip mine material, grout deep mines for additional support for the highway and bridge foundations, or do nothing. Coordination with mine owners and PADEP will occur, as appropriate, throughout final design.
- During construction, all encountered deep mine entrances will be properly sealed for public safety reasons and to control entry of surface water into the deep mines and the potential discharge of mine waters into nearby streams. The discharge of mine waters encountered during construction is of concern. All suspected mine drainage discharges into surface waters, which may be encountered during construction, should be tested in compliance with PADEP surface water quality regulations and standards. The correct treatment and type of mine seal will be selected based on the conditions of the mine, and

will be in place prior to backfilling during construction activities. Implementation of proper erosion and sediment pollution controls and mine drainage abatement technologies will be investigated and designed as part of the final design process.

- Exposed coal beds will be properly sealed to prevent the potential discharge of mine water into nearby streams. The recommendations and engineering design for these seals will be considered as part of the Geotechnical Engineering Report conducted during final design.
- The presence of acid producing material will be identified, selectively handled, buried, or encapsulated in impermeable materials away from exposed coal beds. Any seepage from exposed coal beds will be directed away from stream channels. All suspected mine drainage discharges will be addressed in the final design Geotechnical Engineering Report investigations. Recommendations will be made for neutralization using approved PADEP methods prior to allowing water to enter equal or higher quality streams.
- In areas where coal exists and is economically feasible to extract, the value of the coal resources will be negotiated with the owner of the resource during the right-of-way acquisition process. During construction, overexcavation for the removal of “in-place” coal will be conducted, as appropriate, to prevent potential settlement. The overexcavation will consider the location of the coal bed with respect to its depth below the roadway. This and other issues related to mining and mineral resources will be addressed during the geotechnical subsurface exploration program conducted during final design.
- The location of all producing oil/gas wells and distribution lines within the proposed right-of-way will be identified by field survey during final design activities. Active distribution lines may need to be relocated outside of the project right-of-way. Producing and abandoned wells encountered during construction will be properly closed in conformance with the PADEP criteria. When producing wells are impacted, coordination with the owner may be conducted and replacement wells may be developed, as appropriate. When economically feasible, new access will be provided to access existing wells where the project severs existing roadways. During final design, maintenance of existing wells will be evaluated, as appropriate.

### **Surface Water Resources**

- Avoidance and minimization measures have been considered during the development of the preliminary highway design phase. For example, streams identified with a higher



resource service will be crossed with a bridge structure rather than enclosed in a culvert. Streams identified with a higher resource service were identified during the field investigations and agency field views. In general, these streams display greater diversity in habitat types (i.e., riffle, pool and run complexes, substrate types, cover structures, bank conditions, flow depths and widths).

- In order to reduce or minimize potential impacts to water quality and aquatic biota, the following recommendations will be considered and undertaken where applicable, during final design and construction.
  - Minimize the linear distance of stream impact at each crossing.
  - Design and construct bottomless arch culvert and depressed-bottom culvert structures where feasible based on foundation that will promote the re-establishment of benthic habitat within the culvert.
  - Implement an approved E&S Plan that would prevent construction materials/debris deposition to aquatic habitats.
  - Revegetate all disturbed areas with native, non-invasive species to prevent accelerated erosion.
  - Construct all cofferdams, causeways, and temporary crossings from clean rock fill and other approved materials.
  - Minimize the need for in-stream work by heavy equipment.
  - Develop project sequencing to facilitate in-stream work during periods of seasonal low flow.
  - Designate equipment fueling, storage and service areas away from surface waters to minimize the potential for accidental spillage of petrochemicals into surface waters.
  - Incorporate the use of storm water management ponds and vegetated drainage swales to reduce sediment and toxicant levels of highway runoff prior to entering the receiving streams.
  - Coordinate design and construction of relocated channels with agency personnel.
  - Incorporate depressed bottoms and rip-rap energy dissipaters at culvert cut areas to minimize the effects of scour where appropriate.
  - Treat any intercepted acid mine drainage prior to stream discharge.
  - Develop a stream mitigation plan to compensate for permanent impacts associated with culverting and channel length loss as a result of stream relocation projects. The plan will be developed through coordination with the PFBC and PADEP and be included as part of the PA Chapter 105 permit applications. Measures included within the plan may include, but are not limited to, mine drainage remediation, stream bank fencing, and habitat improvement projects.

- Consider natural channel design and the reuse of natural stream substrates for all proposed channel relocations. These will be addressed during final design in coordination with state and federal regulatory agencies and the permitting process.
  - Coordinate with the PFBC concerning construction limitations of either area or timing related to trout stocked fisheries and trout season.
- Continued coordination with the PFBC, USEPA, and PADEP regarding these recommendations will be ongoing throughout the course of the project.

### **Floodplains and Flood Hazard Areas**

- Proposed impacts to floodplains have been minimized throughout the preliminary design process by shifting alternatives to avoid or minimize floodplain encroachments. This process will continue through final design. Detailed hydrologic and hydraulic analyses will be conducted during final design to determine if structures and associated pier placement would increase the base flood elevation as per 23 CFR 115, 117, and 650. The structures will be designed to avoid increases in the flood elevation of floodways in the project area.
- During final design and prior to construction, permitting procedures will be instituted in accordance with Title 25, Chapter 105, “Dam Safety and Waterway Management” Rules and Regulations, P.L. 851 No. 166 “The Floodplain Management Act”, and Title 25, Chapter 106, “Floodplain Management.” All of these programs and associated permits are administered by PADEP. All actions taken with respect to construction will conform to Executive Order 11988 -Floodplain Management, dated May 24, 1977. Coordination with FEMA and local communities will be conducted as needed throughout the design stage of the project to address impacts to and concerns about floodplain impacts. If it is determined through hydraulic calculations that the project will modify the contour of the base flood elevation (BFE) cumulatively by one foot or more, a Conditional Letter of Map Revision (CLOMR) will be applied for through FEMA.

### **Wetlands**

- In accordance with the regulations, wetland impacts are typically mitigated for in the three subsequent phases referred to as mitigation sequencing. The mitigation sequence is as follows: 1) Avoidance of wetland impacts; 2) Minimization of wetland impacts; 3) Compensatory mitigation for unavoidable wetland impacts (per Executive Order 11990, Statewide Wetland Finding, USCOE/EPA Mitigation MOA dated 1990 and in

accordance with 33 CFR Parts 325 and 332 and 40 CFR Part 230, Compensatory Mitigation for Losses of Aquatic Resources; Final Rule dated June 9, 2008). During the development of alternatives for the proposed project, efforts were made to avoid and minimize impacts to wetlands. Further efforts were made to avoid and minimize wetland impacts during the 404(b)(1) alternatives analysis. The mitigation discussion; therefore, focuses on the third stage of mitigation – compensation.

- A conceptual wetland mitigation plan will be prepared after the circulation of the FEIS. Wetland mitigation replacement sites will be designed to replace lost principal wetland functions exhibited by the impacted wetlands. Coordination will be conducted with PADEP, PFBC, Pennsylvania Game Commission (PGC), USFWS, and the USEPA during the development of the wetland mitigation process through the final design.
- Implementation of the first two steps of the mitigation sequence has occurred throughout preliminary design and will continue through final design. Once these two steps have been completed and wetland impacts are deemed unavoidable, compensation for these impacts will occur. Wetlands impacted by the project will be replaced according to their function and service.
- The following course of action will be followed to offset adverse impacts to wetland resources. Wetland replacement sites will be evaluated and selected in accordance with PADEP Title 25, Section 105.20a, using the following criteria:
  - Availability of replacement hydrology (including potential sources and reliability)
  - Existing land use/land cover and impacts of replacement area development on other natural, cultural, and social resources
  - Ecological compatibility of the replacement area with adjacent land cover (including consideration of existing development and proposed future development)
  - Disturbance level of the site and adjacent areas (disturbed sites are preferred over undisturbed sites due to their low wildlife habitat value)
  - Contiguousness to adjacent wetland and proximity of the replacement areas to impacted wetlands in light of functional impacts (based on the general premise that the entire project lies within the Ohio River basin)
  - Availability of replacement acreage at each potential replacement site
  - Topography and stratigraphy
  - Source of sediments from adjacent areas
  - Construction feasibility and practicality of developing the replacement site

- Consideration of future management and property disposal options available (i.e. transferring the replacement area to state agency [PGC or PFBC], local government, etc.)
- A preliminary mitigation site evaluation has been completed for the proposed alternatives, in order to locate “practicable” replacement sites. Practicable is defined under Section 230.3(q) of the Clean Water Act guidelines as meaning “available and capable of being done after taking into consideration cost, existing technology, and logistics in light of overall project purposes”.
- A visual overview of the project area using the Canonsburg, Clinton, and Midway Pennsylvania USGS quadrangles identified seven potential areas within the project area. A review of PADEP’s Wetland Registry and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service’s Partners for Wildlife Program was also conducted, but there are no registered sites in Washington or Allegheny counties. At this stage of the mitigation process, potential mitigation sites were identified as areas greater than one acre, having low topographic relief, and having a nearby source of hydrology. The areas were then field viewed to collect data on each site. These sites were also correlated to the project area drainage. Preliminary ranking for the mitigation sites has been completed. This portion of the study analyzed the characteristics of each site. Potential sites that possess characteristics considered critical flaws will not be further evaluated. Critical flaws in site characteristics consist of insufficient hydrology, poor topography, incompatible surrounding land use, existing wetlands, existing utilities, poor site accessibility, and incompatible site land use. Potential sites that possess characteristics favoring mitigation were classified “feasible” and include sufficient hydrology, level to nearly level topography, compatible land use, and compatible surrounding land use, absence of or minimal existing wetlands, good access, and absence of utilities. Further analysis of the feasible sites will be conducted. A detailed analysis of the potential mitigation sites will be included in a Natural Resources Report. Potential feasible wetland mitigation areas are depicted on Figure 4-18 of the FEIS. Further evaluation of the potential mitigation sites will include:
  - Additional resource agency coordination and field review
  - Land ownership and acquisition potential
  - Final wetland impact evaluation, including alternative selection
  - Detailed studies of the preferred mitigation sites

## Vegetation and Wildlife

- There will be no direct impacts to the great blue heron rookery itself. Construction activities of the Green Alternative Option 1A would occur approximately 122 meters (400 feet) from the rookery while the nearest operating travel lane would be approximately 213 meters (700 feet) from the rookery. Research suggests that although the rookery and nearby foraging habitats could be sensitive to newer disturbances during the breeding and nesting season, the adult and young birds become accustomed to noise and human activities. Other heron rookeries within a 100 mile radius of the project area were surveyed to track heron use and surrounding disturbances. The survey findings, including observations of active rookeries near major highways, support the available research material. This information is available in the project files. The extent of construction activities near the great blue heron rookery will be minimized to the extent possible; including width of cut and fill area and stockpiling of materials. Refinements in the design, including right-of-way and limits of cut and fill, will occur during final design. Based on final design, provisions will be provided in the construction contract to fence the outer edge of disturbance to keep the contractor out of the area. The heron nests, eggs, and young are protected under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act.
- Impacts to vegetation and wildlife resources could be further minimized by final design measures such as steepening slopes where possible to minimize right-of-way and earthwork requirements, creating a vegetation clear zone along the edge of the roadway to discourage wildlife entry, and preserving existing habitat within the proposed right-of-way where possible.
- Mitigation for this project will be developed in consultation with the USFWS, PGC and Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (PADCNR) during final design. Impacts would be mitigated through the combination of habitat enhancement and replacement. This may include seeding and replanting of disturbed areas in a timely manner; or planting of native shrubs, native warm season grasses, and other native herbaceous vegetation along the right-of-way edge, remnant parcels, in areas adjacent to wetland mitigation site(s), and within the project right-of-way, where appropriate.
- Preliminary designs include bridge structures over Little Chartiers Creek, Chartiers Creek, and the backwater area of Canonsburg Lake. Incorporating these bridge structures into the design of the project will minimize direct impacts to the aquatic resources and maintain connectivity for the wildlife habitat on either side of the structures. Stream

treatments and minimization of impacts to riparian corridors have been discussed with the natural resource agencies and will be implemented where appropriate.

- In accordance with Executive Order 13112 “Invasive Species”, measures will be taken to prevent the introduction and spread of invasive species. Specific commitments to control invasive species will be developed during final design.

### **Threatened and Endangered Species**

- The project would not directly impact any rare, threatened, or endangered species therefore, no mitigation is required. Agency coordination will continue through the final design process of the project.
- The USFWS stated in a letter dated October 3, 2008 that construction of the project is not likely to adversely affect the Indiana bat (federally listed as endangered). This determination is valid for two years from the date of the letter. If the project has not been fully implemented prior to this, an additional review by USFWS will be necessary. If any previously unidentified mine entrances are identified during final design or construction activities, the USFWS will be contacted for further coordination regarding the Indiana bat. If the mist-net survey did not include all potential habitat in all areas that will be directly or indirectly affected by the proposed project, and project-associated features (e.g. cut and fill slopes, access ramps, stormwater features, sedimentation basins, or other features), additional coordination with USFWS will occur regarding an additional mist net survey.

### **Farmlands**

- Efforts were made to avoid and minimize impacts to productive agricultural land in accordance with Act 100, Act 43, ALPP and FPPA. Avoidance and minimization strategies included vertical and horizontal shifts and refinements to the alternatives where prudent and reasonable. If avoidance was not possible, efforts were taken not to segment, bisect or create inaccessible productive agricultural land where prudent and reasonable.
- It was determined during the preliminary alternatives analysis that there is no prudent or reasonable avoidance alternative that exists to prevent the taking of productive agricultural land. The PTC must receive approval from ALCAB, as required by Act 100 and Act 43, prior to the condemnation of productive agricultural land for the purpose of highway construction. The PTC held a Hearing with ALCAB on August 6, 2008 and received approval from ALCAB to condemn productive agricultural lands. The ALCAB

Adjudication and Order, dated August 26, 2008 is provided in project Technical Support Data Files. Efforts will continue to minimize the impacts to productive agricultural lands throughout the final design stages for the Project.

### **Cultural and Archaeological Resources**

- As the project has progressed, efforts have been made through research and coordination with the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) to avoid and minimize impacts to cultural resources. Coordination with the SHPO will continue to protect resources in the project area during final design. A Determination of Effect Report has been prepared for this project. There are no Adverse Effects determined for historic structures.
- A Phase 1B Archaeological Survey, and if necessary, Phase II and Phase III archaeological studies will be conducted within the Area of Potential Effect (APE) for the Selected Alternative. The APE for additional archaeological studies will consist of the proposed right-of-way and the area of the visual field for the selected alternative. A Programmatic Agreement (PA) between the USACOE and the SHPO was executed on March 25, 2009. The PA outlines in detail the process to be followed for any additional archaeological studies. The PA is included in Attachment A of this ROD.

### **Community Facilities**

- Early coordination efforts were established with the participating municipalities and communities and ongoing coordination has occurred with these entities throughout the development of this project. The transfer of project mapping and features information has occurred at major project milestones to provide ongoing planning tools to the local and regional planning organizations. Additional mitigation for changes in land use will involve the transfer of detailed land use/land cover mapping and other project area features to the project area municipalities and communities for their use during their planning activities.

### **Planned Developments**

- Mitigation for changes in land use in the project area as a result of this project will include providing all of the project area municipalities with mapping and other relevant data collected as part of this project to assist in their planning efforts.

## **Residential and Commercial Displacements**

- All properties to be acquired will be purchased in accordance with the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970, as amended, and Title VI of the Civil Rights Act. As such, facilities displaced by the project would be offered the full extent of benefits and payments provided by the acts. Additionally, provisions would be made to assure that any person with a disability who would be displaced is offered replacement housing that has been fitted to meet any special needs. These procedures are fully documented in PTC pamphlet entitled *Policies and Procedures for Right-of-Way Acquisition: Property Owners & Tenants Guide*. The PTC policies that cover relocations include the following:
  - All displaced persons will be offered relocation advisory assistance, as well as the monetary benefits provided by law.
  - All displaced persons will be offered comparable, decent, safe, and sanitary housing that is within their financial means.
  - No person shall be displaced by a construction project unless and until adequate replacement housing has been made available to all affected persons regardless of their race, color, religion, or national origin in accordance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.
  - Services and payments shall be provided to all relocates within the limits of the laws and administrative procedures established by the State.
  - No persons lawfully occupying real property shall be required to move from their dwelling or to move their business, farm operations, or non-profit organization without written notice of at least 90 days prior to the date such move is required.

## **Environmental Justice**

- Because the project will not have a disproportionately high and adverse human health and environmental effect to minority, low-income, or non-English speaking populations, mitigation specific to satisfying the provisions of Environmental Justice will not be necessary. During Final Design activities, the Environmental Justice populations will be monitored to determine if any shifts or concentrations of an Environmental Justice population developed over time within the project area. Any shift of an Environmental Justice population may affect specific project details and may require further investigation and mitigation.



## Visual Resources

- During final design, further opportunities for secluding the roadway through hillside cut sections and limiting the visual disturbance of the roadway by adjacent vegetative planting and natural screening will be evaluated and integrated into the design plans, if feasible. Context sensitive design features will be coordinated with PFBC during final design and incorporated into the design of Green Alternative Option 1A. Other design aesthetic features that will be evaluated include blending the engineering design with the landscape, landscape plantings, natural re-vegetation, and incorporating visually appealing facility elements into the project design. Additionally, the use of widened fill and berm materials between the proposed road and potential viewers will be considered.
- The quality of the “view from the road” and the “view of the road” are important considerations because the selected alternative will serve as one of the principal means of transportation for the region. As such, a major objective of the proposed design will be to construct a transportation facility that will be visually compatible or complementary to the surrounding areas.
- By planting trees adjacent to the facility, viewers from the alternative would be framed and enhanced and views of the alternative would be buffered. Strategic gaps in plantings will be used to frame scenic views. Roadside plantings will be used to hide views of unattractive features, such as power lines, unsightly buildings and other landscape elements. An additional means of visual mitigation could include heavy plantings and rounded slopes within the median. This approach could improve the scenic quality of the area by quickly returning the landscape to a more natural, native appearing state. The use of roadside plantings could improve the chances for faster and more successful re-vegetation while improving slope stability and reducing possible erosion.

## Noise

- The preliminary analysis conducted for the FEIS determined that thirty-four receptors, representing 670 noise sensitive receptors and 232 planned home sites were modeled for the Green Alternative Option 1A to evaluate noise impacts (Table 4-62). Also, thirty-one receptors, representing 193 noise sensitive receptors were modeled for the Tan-Red Alternative to evaluate noise impacts (Table 4-66). For the design year 2030 under the Build Condition, 29 receptors, representing 428 noise sensitive receptors and 232 planned home sites in Section 1 and 24 receptors, representing 128 noise sensitive receptors in Section 2, were found to meet or exceed FHWA Noise Abatement Criteria (NAC) and/or PennDOT criteria.

- Mitigation via structural barriers (noise walls or earthen berms) at all receptors was determined to be not feasible and/or not reasonable in the project area due to: 1) the cost per residence benefited exceeded the current per unit allowance or, 2) the preferred minimum insertion loss of 5 dBA could not be realized.
- The traffic noise environment, potential impacts, and mitigation options for the Selected Alternative will be re-evaluated during Final Design utilizing PennDOT *Publication 24, Project Level Traffic Noise Handbook, May 2007*.

### Air Quality

- The Regional Conformity with Clean Air Act (CAAA) as amended requires a reduction in air quality impacts associated with mobile sources in nonattainment areas prior to the release of federal transportation funds. Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) have the primary responsibility for demonstrating compliance with the CAAA's provisions. SPC serves as the MPO for this area and is responsible for conducting transportation conformity modeling in conjunction with PennDOT.
- This area had been classified a moderate nonattainment area with respect to ozone. It is now considered to be an attainment area with a maintenance plan for ozone. As a result, under the Clean Air Act, as amended, transportation planners are required to demonstrate that the planned projects on the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRP) will conform to the applicable air quality implementation plans. The conformity analyses are conducted by the regional planning agency. For this area, SPC has responsibility for completing these studies. A supplemental air quality conformity determination considering the eight-hour standard was published in June 2007 for the current (2007 – 2010) Transportation Improvement Program and 2035 Transportation and Development Plan (which represents the LRP).
- Any project that is part of a conforming and approved TIP and Long Range Plan (LRP) is considered to be conforming. The Southern Beltway I-79 to Mon/Fayette Expressway Project (a four-lane limited access highway with intermediate interchanges and toll facilities) is part of the 2007-2010 conforming TIP, however it is not included in the 2009-2012 TIP due to the lack of an FHWA-approved financial plan which identifies funding sources for final design, right-of-way acquisition, and construction. Since the project was part of a conforming TIP, it would be reasonable to conclude that regional conformity would be maintained after the project is once again included on a future TIP.

### *PM2.5 Qualitative Analysis*

- The proposed project is located in counties that have been designated as being in nonattainment for PM2.5. The project is not exempt, however, it is not considered to be of air quality concern according to 40CFR 93.123(b)(1)(i-v) and the March 29, 2006 FHWA/EPA guidance entitled "Transportation Conformity Guidance for Qualitative Hot-spot Analysis in PM2.5 and PM10 Nonattainment and Maintenance Areas." The basis for this determination is that the project will not serve a significant volume of diesel traffic as described in the regulations and guidance. As a result, no further project level air quality analysis for this pollutant is required.

### *PM10 Qualitative Analysis*

- Though the area is in attainment for PM10 (partial maintenance area for Clairton and vicinity) NEPA requires that it still be addressed. However, project level quantitative procedures to analyze, PM10 are not yet approved for use. Neither FHWA nor EPA supports the use of the CAL3QHC model for particulate analysis for the following reasons:
  - While the model does have that particular option for PM10, the model, has never been validated against real world PM10 data for this purpose. Thus, there is no indication that the model will produce meaningful results.
  - EPA attempted to validate the model for PM10 in the mid-1990s in order to implement the conformity rule's requirement for PM10 hotspot modeling. However, this effort was unsuccessful, and both EPA and FHWA issued qualitative modeling guidance instead.
  - In EPA's November 2003 proposed conformity rulemaking, there was a suggestion to eliminate the qualitative PM10 analysis requirement. Many comments were received to keep the analysis. Nonetheless, if PM10 analysis would not be necessary for conformity, which is an explicit Clean Air Act requirement for ensuring that transportation projects will not cause violations of the air quality standards, it is subsequently difficult to see why it would be appropriate for NEPA.
- As such, with the qualitative requirements still in effect, the transportation conformity rule (40 CFR 93.116) states that any project-level conformity determination in a PM10 nonattainment or maintenance area must document that no new local PM10 violations

will be created and the severity or number of existing violations will not be increased because of the project. Because the EPA has not released modeling guidance on how to perform quantitative PM10 hot spot analysis, such quantitative analysis is not currently required (40 CFR 93.123(b)(4)).

- However, if a quantitative analysis is not done, the demonstration required by 40 CFR 93.116 must be based on a qualitative consideration of local factors (40 CFR 93.123(b)(2)). A reasoned and logical explanation of why a hot spot would not be created or worsened is provided in the following paragraphs for project-level conformity determinations. This explanation is based on the analysis conducted based on FHWA's guidance for qualitative project level PM10 hot spot analysis (2001).
- As such, the PM10 monitor at Old Oakdale Road in South Fayette Township, Allegheny County (the closest PM10 monitor) shows that the current data collections are only about 29% of the 24-hour standard and about 36% of the annual standard. An NAAQS impact is highly unlikely, especially since the trend from 1994 has shown a fairly regular decrease (35% and 50% of the respective 24-hour and, annual standards in 1994).

### **Hazardous and Residual Waste Sites**

- **OIL WELL #1972** - Well #1972 is an oil well located in Cecil Township approximately 27 meters (88 feet) south of Georgetown Road (S.R. 1010) (Figure 4-38). The well has been plugged and three tanks associated with the well are situated in a woody area approximately 18 meters (59 feet) from McPherson Creek. Soil discoloration was observed around two of the tanks. Due to the suspected presence of petroleum byproducts from the gas wells and metals and other elements from the associated brine tanks, soil testing and analysis are suggested for all well sites. Soil analysis for DRO, GRO, TPH, TCL VOCs and SVOCs, and PADEP clean fill metals should be performed during the Phase II ESA. Shallow borings should be taken with a hand auger. A composite sample should be obtained from each auger location and analyzed.
- **OIL WELL #1859** - Well #1859 is an active oil well located in North Strabane Township approximately 654 meters (2,144 feet) west of Waterdam Road (S.R. 1053) and 1,706 meters (5,597 feet) southeast of Route 19 (Figure 4-38). The well is situated on top of a hill behind the Waterdam Farms housing development. There are two tanks in fair condition connected to the pump. Due to the suspected presence of petroleum byproducts from the oil well and metals and other elements from the associated brine tanks, soil testing and analysis are suggested for both tank sites. Soil analysis for DRO, GRO, TPH, TCL VOCs and SVOCs, and PADEP clean fill metals should be performed during the

Phase II ESA. Shallow borings should be taken with a hand auger. A composite sample should be obtained from each auger location and analyzed.

- **MON VIEW MINE PONDS** - The Mon View Mine Ponds (also known as Mathies Mine Ponds), identified in the PAR as Thomas Portal Mine Ponds, are located in Nottingham Township approximately 183 meters (602 feet) south of Venetia Road (S.R. 1006) and 1,081 meters (3,546 feet) west of Valley View Road (S.R. 1057) (Figure 4-38). The series of four ponds terraced into the hillside served as a water treatment system for residual wastewater from Mathies Mine. Each pond is clay lined and the discharge from the water treatment system was monitored by a groundwater well. The well was registered as Thomas discharge 003 (Permit #63841306) with the PADEP Bureau of Mining and Reclamation. PADEP issued a report to the Mon View Mining Company on June 5, 1996, that monitoring well 003 and its two associated stream points could be discontinued. Thomas discharge 003 has not flowed in years due to the mine being sealed and the pond water level being far below the discharge level. The official status of this property is “active without recent discharge.” Sludge has never been removed from this site. Due to the suspected presence of heavy metals, soil testing and analysis for the PADEP clean fill metals are suggested during the Phase II ESA. Soil borings would be done with non-motorized hand tools.
- **MITCHELL POWER STATION FLY ASH DISPOSAL SITE** - This site is located in Nottingham Township approximately 838 meters (2,749 feet) east of Mingo Church Road (S.R. 1061) and bound to the south by Mingo Church Road (S.R. 1061) (Figure 4-38). The PAR report identified this site as a registered landfill for fly ash disposal and as a groundwater-monitoring site, calling it the Mingo Fly Ash Disposal Area. Allegheny Energy Supply reported that this site was formerly used as a disposal site for “bottom ash.” According to the records at the PADEP, the site was issued its permit (#300371) in December 1974. This disposal site has been inactive since 1982 and completed its closure in 1998. PADEP inspection reports from 1975 to 1999 were examined, and there have been no violations since an erosion issue in 1975. The site has been covered with a layer of soil and is now completely vegetated. According to the Inactive Ash Disposal Site Closure Plan (June 1994) prior to the 1974 permit, an estimated 171,000 cubic yards of ash had already been deposited. The permit allowed for a 550,000 cubic yard expansion to hold additional fly ash. The report states that the fly ash had not been tested, but Allegheny Power Service Corporation believes that it would be Class II. Class II is defined as non-hazardous waste with medium toxic levels compared to the standards set forth in *PA Code Title 25, Chapters 287-299*. The ash disposal area is 20 acres in size. A sediment pond, located on-site, is regulated by a NPDES permit. The analytical results for surface water samples indicate minor exceedences of *PA Code Title 25*,

*Chapter 16 Human Health Criteria for Surface Waters* for boron, chromium and selenium in the sediment pond and in the unnamed tributary to Peters Creek. Due to the known existence of heavy metals, soil and water testing and analysis are suggested for Phase II ESA activities. Soil borings would be done with non-motorized hand tools. The analysis parameters for the soil samples are dependent upon material deposition following removal. Coordination with the PADEP determined that if the fly ash would be disposed of in a municipal landfill, there would be minimal soil testing involved and a permit would not be required. The exact analysis would need to be determined through coordination with the municipal landfill. Most likely, the fly ash would be tested for Toxicity Characteristic Leaching Procedure, TCLP (metals). If the fly ash would be used for structural fill, a mining permit would be required from PADEP and the fly ash should be tested for the PADEP list of clean fill metals and polynuclear aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs) in addition to the other tests. When being used for fill, there is a concern with leachate and total analysis. PADEP suggested contacting Allegheny Power to determine if they have an alternate site to move the fly ash to or if they could use the material to backfill some of the old coal mines. *PA Code Title 25, Chapter 16* contains a list of criteria for taking surface-water samples. During the Phase II ESA, surface water draining into the retention pond and the unnamed tributary to Peters Creek from the former on-site strip mines should be analyzed in accordance with *PA Code Title 25, Chapter 16 Human Health Criteria for Surface Waters*.

- **GAS WELL #21287** - Gas Well #21287 is located in Union Township approximately 792 meters (2,598 feet) west of Airport Road (T-834) (Figure 4-38). One brine tank was found in close proximity to the well. Due to the suspected presence of petroleum byproducts from the gas wells and metals and other elements from the associated brine tanks, soil testing and analysis are suggested for all well sites. Soil analysis for DRO, GRO, TPH, TCL VOCs and SVOCs, and PADEP clean fill metals should be performed during the Phase II ESA. Shallow borings should be taken with a hand auger. A composite sample should be obtained from each auger location and analyzed.
- **ABANDONED GAS STATION** - This site is located in Nottingham Township and bound on the northern portion of the property by Venetia Road (S.R. 1006), approximately 18 meters (60 feet) southeast of the intersection with Bebout Road (S.R. 1010) (Figure 4-38). This site was identified as the location of an abandoned gas station during local resident interviews. Field reconnaissance identified the location of storage tank access points, confirming the prior land use. Coordination with PADEP could not confirm the prior land usage or the existence of associated storage tanks. A phone interview with the property owner, on May 30, 2001, confirmed there had been a gas station on-site that burned down approximately ten years ago. The owner believes there are two tanks, 3,000

to 4,000 gallons each, still on the property. He stated that the original gas station was built approximately 50 years ago. Due to the possible presence of USTs, and the location's prior use as a gas station, a Phase II ESA should be conducted for the site and the investigation would include the use of GPR or electromagnetic fields (EM-61) to determine the location of any underground anomalies, such as USTs, fuel conduits, and/or changes in soil conditions due to potential UST leakage. An EM-61 survey is recommended for areas under concrete because rebar in the concrete may provide negative feedback in the GPR results. Testing for DRO, GRO, TPH, lead, VOCs, and Form U parameters is suggested. Since the Phase II ESA involves non-motorized hand tools, soil samples would not be able to be taken because the suspected location of the USTs is under concrete. Therefore, soil sampling would be included in a Phase III ESA study. Also, when there is a reasonable suspicion that groundwater may be intercepted by construction activities, near UST locations, an assessment of groundwater contamination must be conducted. The testing of the groundwater would be conducted during the Phase III ESA.

### **Construction Impacts**

- Construction activities associated with the Selected Alternative could result in disruptions to local residents and the traveling public. These disruptions will be temporary, localized, and of short duration during the construction period. Traffic will be maintained on all major roads, I-79, U.S. Route 19, and Turnpike 43 (Mon/Fayette Expressway) at all times during construction of the Selected Alternative. Construction will be performed to comply with all applicable federal, state, and local laws regarding safety, health, and sanitation. All contractor's are required to adhere to the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) guidelines to protect the life and health of employees, the safety of the public, and the integrity of adjacent properties. Construction of the project will require a temporary occupancy of a portion of Canonsburg Lake, which may result in temporary inconvenience to users of the recreational facility.
- **Access** - Temporary road closures and reduced speed work zones will be required during construction of the proposed project. The temporary road closures and short-term traffic delays will create minor inconveniences to the residents and traveling public. Construction of the project could result in decreased access and potential increased response time for emergency service providers during peak traffic periods.

Emergency service providers affected by construction will receive advance notice regarding the proposed sequencing of construction activities and any required detours before the commencement of construction.

All of the school districts in the project area will be informed of the proposed sequencing of construction activities and any required detours well in advance of the start of construction to ensure that sufficient transit access is maintained during construction.

- **Water Quality** - Mitigation for potential impacts to water quality will be addressed through the implementation of proper soil erosion and sedimentation control measures. Before initiating construction activities, a Soil Erosion and Sedimentation Control Plan and an Earth Disturbance Permit will be prepared in accordance with PennDOT, PADEP and Washington County Conservation District's guidelines.

Some of the controls will include, but are not limited to:

- Diverting stormwater originating off-site from construction area
  - Constructing channels during low flow periods
  - Using proper material for temporary stream crossings
  - Seeding and mulching exposed soils to reduce erosion potential
  - Using temporary stormwater sedimentation ponds
  - Using hay-bales and silt barrier fences.
- **Air Quality and Noise** – Mitigation identified to control fugitive dust emissions includes the use of approved dust suppressors such as calcium chloride and/or water. All fugitive dust emissions will be controlled according to 25 PA Code §123.1. Noise mitigation measures will include but will not be limited to:
    - Using proper mufflers on construction vehicles and equipment to mitigate excessive noise
    - Operating and maintaining the equipment and vehicles according to the manufacturers' standards
    - Limiting operating times, especially near sensitive areas
    - Using strobe lights, instead of back-up beepers on heavy equipment during any necessary nighttime construction in populated areas
  - **Utilities** – All disruptions are planned to occur in such a manner as to minimize inconvenience to utility users. Coordination with the utility companies will occur during preliminary and final design in order to guard against the potential for unplanned utility involvement and to locate the utilities. Additionally, before construction, the PA One Call system will be used to confirm utility locations and thereby avoid unplanned utility involvement.



- **Recreational Trails** – Coordination with the owners and operators of the Montour Trail Association will be conducted during preliminary and final design to ensure the minimal disruption of trail use. Although temporary disruptions of trail traffic may occur, a goal of the mitigation measures will be to minimize and control disruptions to trail services. Measures will also be evaluated to maintain safety for trail users during construction.
- **Railroads** – The crossings of the various railroads will require aerial easements to be obtained from the rail lines during final design activities. Coordination during final design will include development of a plan to have on-site railroad representation during construction activities.
- **Construction Vibration** – Because of the rural/urban nature of the project area and the density of homes in some areas near the proposed alignments, all blasting, pile driving, and riveting will be minimized, as appropriate. Contractors will be required to follow the manufacturer's standards for equipment operation and maintenance. If blasting is required, pre-blast and post-blast surveys will be conducted on structures in the vicinity. Also, coordination meetings will be held with municipal officials and property owners to explain the blasting process and schedule.

All mitigation commitments from the FEIS and this ROD will be consolidated into a single Mitigation Report. This report will be made available to final design consultants and agency officials, and will be used as a tool by the final design management consultant to ensure commitments are fulfilled.

### **MONITORING AND ENFORCEMENT PROGRAM**

The PA Turnpike Commission has committed to monitor final design development and construction of this project to ensure that all mitigation commitments made in the FEIS, this ROD, and permit conditions are implemented. Appropriate periodic briefings will be offered for environmental resource agency representatives (USEPA, USACOE, USFWS, US Coast Guard, PADEP, PFBC, PGC, PHMC, and the PA Department of Agriculture (PADOA)) to monitor the progress of final design and construction and to refine the ongoing efforts to minimize the project's impacts. These efforts will include consideration of displacements and community impacts, effects on cultural resources, wetlands impact minimization and mitigation, stream relocation, stormwater management design, noise abatement, and visual impacts. A final design management firm will assist in the environmental monitoring effort. A construction management firm will be selected to continue the environmental monitoring when the project reaches the construction stage.

## **COMMENTS RECEIVED**

The following comments were received in response to circulation of the FEIS and were considered in preparation of this ROD prior to issuing a Department of Army Permit to the applicant. Copies of the comment letters are included in the ROD Basis Report presented in Attachment B.

<b>Federal Agency</b>		
Pagnanelli	Lori	Federal Aviation Administration
Arguto	William	Environmental Protection Agency
<b>State Agency</b>		
Boyer	Emilee	PA Department of Conservation and Natural Resources
<b>Citizens</b>		
Christina	Sheryl	Self
<b>State Agency</b>		
Bole	Donald	PA Department of Environmental Protection
Mixon	Kevin	PA Game Commission
<b>Organization</b>		
Baillie	John	Citizens for Pennsylvania's Future (PennFuture)
David	McGuirk	Citizens for Alternatives to New Toll Roads (CANTR)
<b>Citizens</b>		
Eckert	Bob and Gina	Self
Swoager	Calvin	Self
Zanaglio	James	Self

## CONCLUSION

Based upon a thorough review of numerous public interest factors, it is my determination that the public interest and aquatic resources are best served by adoption of the Green Alternative Option 1A in Section 1 and the Tan-Red Alternative in Section 2. Both alternatives are identified as the Preferred Alternative in the Southern Beltway Transportation Project I-79 to Mon/Fayette Expressway Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS). The factors considered include: Analysis and evaluation contained in the FEIS; Consideration of the identified project needs; Engineering parameters and environmental effects (natural, cultural, and social), including an analysis of adverse disproportionate effects to minority and low-income populations; Public input; Environmental resource agency input; Testimony and comments received at the Public Hearing and DEIS review and comment period; and written comments on the FEIS during the 32-day review period. The proposed plan avoids and minimizes adverse environmental effects to the extent practicable and adequately compensates for unavoidable damages to aquatic resources. I have concluded that the benefits of the proposed plan outweigh the adverse effects and that implementation of the project is in the public interest. Therefore, the Green Alternative Option 1A and Tan-Red Alternative are adopted as the Selected Alternative for the Southern Beltway Transportation Project I-79 to Mon/Fayette Expressway in Washington County, Pennsylvania.

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

13 May 09



Michael P. Crall  
Colonel, Corps of Engineers  
District Engineer

