

PENNS NECK AREA EIS

October 3, 2002 Correspondence from Sandra Shapiro

From: Sandra Shapiro
Sent: Thursday, October 03, 2002 12:05 PM
To: Senator Peter Inverso, Assemblywoman Linda Greenstein,
Assemblyman Gary Guear, Anthony Sabidussi
Cc: Jon Carnegie; Martin Robins; Helen Neuhaus
Subject: Complete a Thorough EIS

I sent the following letter today:

October 3, 2002

The Honorable James McGreevey
Governor, State of New Jersey
State House
Trenton, New Jersey 08625

Commissioner James Fox
New Jersey Dept. of Transportation
1035 Parkway Avenue
Trenton, New Jersey 08625

Dear Governor McGreevey and Commissioner Fox:

Lake Carnegie, the Delaware and Raritan Canal State Park, and the Millstone River and its tributaries form a continuum of parkland filled with wildlife. The area also provides recreation for thousands of people who row, canoe, kayak, fish, walk, jog, bicycle, and cross-country ski in or along those waterways. Some people even use the paths to provide a modicum of serenity while walking or bicycling to work.

Yet this unique area is threatened by the possibility of a road near the shores of the river and the canal.

Many cities now rue the decisions, made a generation or more ago, to build roads next to their rivers. In most cases the rivers were the reasons for the development of those cities; they provided drinking water, transportation, as well as power. It seemed logical to site the roads next to former water-transport routes and well away from areas that were rapidly filling with commercial development.

Now those cities are trying to clean the very same rivers and to reclaim their waterfronts as sites for recreation. It's too late for most. But it's certainly not too late for us in central New Jersey; we've not yet lost our waterfront.

The Roundtable for the Penns Neck Area Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) has been meeting for the past year and a half to help find a solution to the traffic and mobility problems in the region, but a solution that will also protect the precious historic properties, archaeological sites, neighborhoods, and the environment.

If a road is to be built or greatly modified, the New Jersey Department of Transportation estimates that construction would not begin until approximately 2008. However, the NJ DOT wants to hurry the Roundtable process, rushing the key environmental and historical studies in order to complete a Draft EIS by this December. What's the rush?

We should allow the process to continue without unreasonable time constraints so that the historical and environmental studies can be thoroughly completed and subjected to the same scrutiny that was given to the development of the 18 road alternatives presented on Monday at the Penns Neck Area EIS In-progress Review. It is more important to do it right before the Draft EIS is released.

Why risk a faulty document subject to question? Why risk irreversible damage to the environment?

Sincerely,

Sandra Shapiro

cc: Senator Peter Inverso
Assemblywoman Linda Greenstein
Assemblyman Gary Guear
Mr. Anthony Sabadussi, NJ Department of Transportation
Martin Robbins, Transportation Policy Institute, Rutgers University
Jon Carnegie , Transportation Policy Institute, Rutgers University
Helen Neuhaus, Helen Neuhaus & Associates