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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

April 22, 2021

The Honorable Peter DeFazio
Chairman
House Committee on Transportation and
Infrastructure
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Sam Graves
Ranking Member
House Committee on Transportation and
Infrastructure
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chair DeFazio and Ranking Member Graves:

I am requesting funding for PA 61 St. Clair to Frackville Reconstruction Project in surface transportation reauthorization legislation.

The project sponsor for this project is Northeastern Pennsylvania Alliance and the project is located at the intersection of PA 61 and Terry Rich Boulevard and continuing through New Castle, Blythe, Ryan, and West Mahanoy Townships before ending at the intersection of PA 61 and East Spruce Street in Frackville Borough, Schuylkill County.

The funding is designated for the total reconstruction of 4.4 miles of PA 61 including horizontal alignment corrections, improved shoulder widths, median improvements, improved highway drainage, rebuilding two culverts, and repairing the remaining eight bridges and culverts. Vertical rock outcroppings will be cut back to improve sight distances, improve shoulder widths, provide a catchment area for rock falls, and improve snow removal operations. The super elevations within the curves will be adjusted to meet current design standards. Guide rail, end treatments, and impact attenuators will be upgraded and extended. All gabion baskets and retaining walls that are failing will be replaced or eliminated by shifting the alignment of the road away from the edge of the embankment. The project will also reconstruct the intersection of PA 61 and Darkwater Road, widening the cross section, expanding culverts, providing turn lanes, and adding acceleration and deceleration lanes that can accommodate large vehicles.

The project is an appropriate use of taxpayer dollars and is anticipated to have the following benefits: PA 61 in Schuylkill County is a four lane north/south principal arterial roadway on the National Highway System (NHS) and designated a Critical Rural Freight Corridor. It serves as a 25-mile critical connection between Interstates 78 and 81. PA 61 is the lifeline needed to sustain the expanding economic opportunities provided by the growing warehousing, distribution, manufacturing, and logistics centers in the area. The continued operation of this critical freight corridor is endangered by unstable slopes and roadway geometric deficiencies that contribute to

safety hazards along the corridor. In 2018, PennDOT permanently closed the left lane of the southbound bifurcated alignment due to structural deficiencies in the fill embankment constructed with the original roadway. Any further degradation of the southbound embankment puts the ability to keep the remaining southbound lane open in jeopardy and will result in the need for PennDOT to close the southbound alignment through the bifurcated section by 2028. The improvements will benefit residents of distressed former coal towns and the 48 Fortune 500 companies that have invested in the region, creating new jobs that depend on a reliable road network.

I certify that neither I nor my immediate family has any financial interest in this project.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Dan Meuser", is positioned above the printed name.

Dan Meuser
Member of Congress
April 22, 2021