

CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH
4TH DISTRICT, NEW JERSEY

CONSTITUENT SERVICE CENTERS:

MONMOUTH
112 Village Center Drive
Freehold, NJ 07728-2510
(732) 780-3035

OCEAN
405 Route 539
Plumsted, NJ 08514-2303
(609) 286-2571; (732) 350-2300

MERCER
4573 South Broad Street
Hamilton, NJ 08620-2215
(609) 585-7878

2373 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515-3004
(202) 225-3765



Congress of the United States
House of Representatives

December 1, 2014

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<http://chrissmith.house.gov>

Mr. Gregory G. Nadeau
Acting Administrator
Federal Highway Administration
1200 New Jersey Ave., SE
Washington, D.C. 20590-0001

Dear Acting Administrator Nadeau,

I am writing to express my strong support for the much-needed roadway improvements proposed and currently under review for New Jersey State Highway 66 in Neptune Township, New Jersey.

In response to my enclosed correspondence and follow up inquiries, my staff met with representatives of the New Jersey Department of Transportation in November. NJDOT demonstrated a hands-on understanding of the traffic and safety problems and a genuine commitment to implementing a permanent solution for this hazardous stretch of roadway. I am pleased to report that NJDOT has also dedicated funds to a recently begun concept development phase for this project—the second phase of their five-phase project delivery process. I am encouraged by the work NJDOT has begun and the shared commitment to alleviating this serious traffic safety problem.

By way of background, there has been an ongoing, multi-decade need to alleviate the bottleneck congestion on Highway 66 in Neptune. The roadway precipitously narrows from four lanes to two for a roughly 1.2 mile stretch before it reverts to four lanes again. It is critical to note that the full highway (with the mid-stretch lane reduction) serves as an emergency evacuation route for tens of thousands of Jersey Shore area residents and is home to bustling retail establishments, office parks and restaurants. Additionally, it provides access to and from the widely-traveled Garden State Parkway. Truly, its importance to public safety and the community cannot be understated.

Unfortunately, traffic comes to a standstill daily on this short stretch, as the current two-lane section of the roadway cannot handle the number of vehicles. This situation is made worse during the summer as thousands of visitors from the Greater New York area flock to the Jersey Shore each day. During storms—when the need for expeditious evacuation is most paramount, the traffic moves at an alarmingly slow pace.

Co-Chairman of the following member organizations: Task Force on Alzheimer's Disease • Bi-Partisan Coalition for Combating Anti-Semitism • Lyme Disease Caucus
Coalition for Autism Research and Education • Global Internet Freedom Caucus • Bi-Partisan Congressional Pro-Life Caucus • Bosnia Caucus • Poland Caucus
Ad Hoc Congressional Committee for Irish Affairs • Congressional Caucus on Human Trafficking • Vietnam Caucus • Congressional Heart and Stroke Coalition

The Township of Neptune, County of Monmouth, and North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority (NJTPA) have all placed high priority on comprehensively alleviating the unsafe traffic conditions on Route 66. Over the course of several years, some of the required easements and right-of-way access have been acquired and commercial/residential development in the area has only been permitted if such proposals properly accommodate an eventual completion of the roadway improvement. The NJDOT is collecting additional data, coordinating with stakeholders, conducting environmental screening, and scoping out possible planning alternatives among other tasks all with the expectation of completing the Concept Development Phase by mid-2015.

With this goal in mind, I have been advised that NJDOT is working with the FHWA to partner on the project and comply with all FHWA standards and requirements. Because of the significant investment of federal resources anticipated, I wish to convey my fervent commitment to this important endeavor and urge you to work to ensure that the FHWA is proceeding as purposefully and expeditiously as possible in keeping with federal requirements. Know that I stand ready to help you and other officials at FHWA to properly move this much-needed project from concept to construction.

I thank you in advance for your full consideration and attention and look forward to your timely reply. Please do not hesitate to reach out to me or my Public Policy Director, Jo Schloeder, at my Freehold Constituent Center, (732) 780-3035 or jo.schloeder@mail.house.gov should you have any questions or need any additional information.

Sincerely,



CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH
Member of Congress

CHS:jss

cc: Robert Clark
Division Administrator
New Jersey Division
Federal Highway Administration
840 Bear Tavern Road, Suite 202
West Trenton, NJ 08628

John T. Case
Acting Assistant Commissioner
New Jersey Department of Transportation
P.O. Box 600
Trenton, NJ 08625-0600