

PENNSYLVANIA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION



PennDOT Engineering District 9-0
1620 North Juniata Street
Hollidaysburg, Pennsylvania 16648
Thomas A. Prestash, P.E.
District Executive

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact – Tara M. Callahan
814-696-7101
Cell 814-932-8030
E-mail tacallahan@state.pa.us

May 20, 2005
Press Release No. 05-083

PENNDOT / MDSHA CONSIDER ANOTHER US 219 OPTION SOUTH OF MEYERSDALE CITIZENS' GROUP OFFERS AN EASTERN ALIGNMENT FOR REVIEW

SALISBURY (May 20) –The Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT) and the Maryland State Highway Administration (MDSHA) together with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) are reviewing a recently proposed route resulting from public input as part of the US Route 219, Meyersdale to I-68 Project.

Maryland residents suggested a new alignment which would construct a new four-lane section of US 219 that would follow the ridge top of Meadow Mountain. The Meadow Mountain route to the east was an attempt to reduce residential impacts.

PennDOT and MDSHA introduced the suggested route to the project's Community Advisory Committee (CAC) Thursday night. PennDOT project manager, Dave Sherman stressed that feasibility studies need to be done before it is known whether the eastern route will be carried into detailed analysis. The suggested route to the east is outside Maryland's "priority funding areas" designed to encourage smart growth and reduce sprawl.

"We have asked our project consultants to review the proposed alignment for potential impacts to environmental, socio-economic and cultural resources. That information will determine whether a route to the east is a feasible alternative to those already developed," Sherman explained.

Alignments and the potential impacts of each will be documented in an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for FHWA to review and select a preferred alternatives. The EIS development process includes gathering and evaluating public input and agency review comments on the EIS document.

“The ultimate goal of the EIS development process is to identify an improvement alternative that achieves the best balance of impacts,” Sherman said. For now, there is no preferred alternative although we continue to narrow the range of alternatives being studied. Alternatives D, E, and AE are currently in the detailed study phase.”

The CAC was created by PennDOT and MDSHA as a cross section of the community to provide local input into project development. A public plans display and hearing are planned for early next year. The public meeting will allow for additional public input.

###