

Excerpts from Governor Rendell's April 24, 2009 Announcement on CSV

The funding issues standing in the way of taking the Susquehanna Valley Thruway to construction are considerable.

It was those daunting hurdles that prompted PennDOT to announce last July that it wanted to forgo bringing final design of the northern section to completion.

Congressman Carney has been a hardy advocate for this project in particular and this region generally. In fact, CSV is his No. 1 priority.

He has repeatedly made clear to me just how important this project is for the region.

So, responding to his concerns, I am announcing today that I have directed PennDOT to complete the final design for the northern section. This will allow final design and waterway permit applications to be completed on the northern section of the Central Susquehanna Valley Thruway. This includes the design for a large bridge over the West Branch of the Susquehanna River with a connection between the existing U.S. 15 at Winfield and the southern terminus of the four-lane Route 147 south of Interstate 80.

Specific items PennDOT will be working on:

1. Complete design on nine bridges.
2. Complete the hydraulic analysis for the Susquehanna River Bridge
3. Complete the soils and rock borings
4. Complete the waterway/wetland and National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit applications

PennDOT will not advance any additional right-of-way purchases or start design of the Southern Section until construction funds are identified.

We want to be in the right position to take advantage of any breakthroughs we may see from Washington.

Two big items are on the to-do list.

1. We need the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) to agree to add the Routes 11 and 15 corridor to the participating miles in the Appalachian Development Highway System. We have notified the ARC of our intent but we need to find the right time to make the formal presentation. Frankly, if we had done the presentation before now, our request would have been rejected.
2. We need Congress and the President to agree to restore toll credits for use in Appalachian Development Highway projects. We had toll credit provisions in both the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) of 1991 and the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21), but they were removed in the current federal surface transportation law, Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users

(SAFETEA-LU) for use with Appalachian Development Highways. Toll credits is a funding technique that arises from the fact we have a Pennsylvania Turnpike and other toll bridges in Pennsylvania that saved the federal government highway and bridge capital expenditures. So we get credit for that and in essence, can use toll credits to have the federal government pay 100 percent of the cost of some projects. That is what we need to have happen if we want to bring the Susquehanna Valley Thruway to construction and completion.

This is a step that keeps this important project moving. Congressman Carney played a key role in keeping me apprised of this situation and I am happy to do my part to keep this project moving.

I look forward to working with Congressman Carney as we continue to face the financial hurdles standing in the way of bringing this region a completed Central Susquehanna Valley Thruway.