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## **Wolf Administration Celebrates Start of Long Awaited CSVT River Bridge Project**

*Secretary Leslie S. Richards Cites Act 89 Role in Project Start*

**Union Township, PA** – On behalf of Governor Tom Wolf, Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT) Secretary Leslie S. Richards hosted a groundbreaking ceremony Friday for the first contract of the \$670 million Central Susquehanna Valley Transportation Project (CSVT). A \$156 million river bridge is the first of several construction improvements planned as part of the project.

“This project will result in significant improvements when it comes to traffic and overall travel along this congested corridor,” Governor Wolf said. “It also shows how Act 89, the state’s comprehensive transportation funding bill, is leveraging new revenue in an efficient and effective way.”

“This is a massive undertaking – the largest new capacity project underway in Pennsylvania,” Secretary Richards said. “This project stands as a testament to the dedication and hard work needed to deliver transportation improvements,” Richards said. “All here have done that, and we stand today to celebrate the start of a wonderful improvement for this region.”

The CSVT project will ultimately provide a 13-mile limited access highway connecting PA 147 in Northumberland County just south of the PA 45 Interchange, to US 11/15 in Snyder County just north of the Borough of Selinsgrove. When completed, the river bridge will be more than 4,500 feet long with a peak elevation of 180 feet.

“My administration is committed to delivering on the promise of Act 89, and this investment demonstrates that we have state government that is working for the people and setting the stage for economic and job growth in this region,” Gov. Wolf said. “This improvement also demonstrates the fruits of bipartisan compromise on the important issues that face us.”

Richards noted that the project is moving forward with resources provided by Act 89, Pennsylvania’s far-reaching transportation plan. She thanked state senators and state representatives from the region who supported the law and local stakeholders who championed the project over several decades.

“Our 40 year wait for this needed project is over,” said Sen. John Gordner of the 27<sup>th</sup> District. “This project will relieve traffic congestion, improve safety and will spur economic development in the Central Susquehanna Valley.”

“After 40 years of false starts, the CSVT is now a reality,” said Sen. Gene Yaw of the 23<sup>rd</sup> District. “This is a smart, strategic transportation investment in our region that will serve as an

economic keystone to north central Pennsylvania. Undoubtedly, it will bring relief to thousands of motorists traveling daily along US 11/15 from the Maryland border to the New York state line. As one of those motorists, I am certain that the planned thruway will provide a safer highway system for all by relieving traffic congestion, and improving the flow of goods and services throughout the region."

Added State Rep. Lynda Schlegel Culver, of the 108<sup>th</sup> District:

"This is the project that was known as the road that would never be built. It took the involvement, partnership and support of public officials from all levels of government, included elected officials, agencies, chambers and the community at large to make this project a reality. Thank you to PennDOT for never giving up on this project. This is a great example of what can happen when we all work together for the betterment of our region."

Added Rep. Garth Everett of the 84<sup>th</sup> District:

"To me this is not just about convenience and traffic delays, it's about stimulating economic development not only near the bypass but in the whole area from the New York border to Harrisburg. The easy east-west access to major markets provided by Interstate 80 combined with the new north-south accessibility provided by the bypass will make the whole Route 11/15 area very attractive to businesses looking to locate or expand - to me - it's all about jobs."

Added Rep. Fred Keller of the 85<sup>th</sup> District:

"This CSVT project represents a tremendous opportunity for this Valley and with proper planning and local leadership, can serve as a catalyst in revitalizing our communities and growing the economy in Central Pennsylvania."

Richards noted that PennDOT awarded a \$156 million contract last fall for the new bridge and in August expects to award a second contract for work north of the bridge, and next spring a contract for work south of the bridge. The bridge is expected to be completed in 2020. Work will progress on both the northern and southern sections with a number of contracts over the next several years.

"The 13-mile section of highway is scheduled to be opened to traffic in 2024, and that will mean the long-awaited closure of the missing link in the Route 15 north-south corridor through Pennsylvania will be accomplished," Richards said. "The impact for this region will be dramatic. Traffic congestion on the commercial district through Shamokin Dam will be eased, making for a better experience for the shoppers who frequent the many retail outlets in this stretch. The reduced traffic on the area road network will also lead to fewer crashes."

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