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Senate of Pennsylvania

August 16, 2018

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The Honorable Leslie Richards, Secretary
Pennsylvania Department of Transportation
400 North Street, 8th Floor
Harrisburg, PA 17120-0095

Dear Secretary Richards:

I am writing today to express concerns with aspects of Norfolk Southern's plan to alter bridges through Pittsburgh's Northside neighborhoods. As you know, the railroad was awarded a \$20 million grant through PennDOT's Rail Transportation Assistance Program last year, to be used to alter 14 bridges, some of which run through the Northside, which is part of the 42nd Senatorial District, that will accommodate doublestack train cars.


Since being awarded these funds, Norfolk Southern has been less than forthcoming with the community in discussing in detail their plans and how these plans will affect residents of the Northside. A June 26 "Public Meeting" hosted by Norfolk Southern officials was insulting to many residents I have spoken with as it was not a meeting of any kind, created more questions instead of providing answers, and reeked of the railroad simply checking off a to-do list item of having "met with the community."

An increase in the number of trains; the potential of roads, bridges, and sidewalks being redesigned and rebuilt; how Allegheny Commons, which enjoys protected status under the National Historic Preservation Act may be affected; are only a few of the questions residents and stakeholders have a right to ask and have answered before a project of this magnitude begins.

Based on these outstanding questions and the railroad's lack of transparency to this point, I am requesting the railroad's initial application for funding be re-evaluated and that no state funds are provided for this project until a true community process takes place.

If I may answer any questions or provide you with any additional information, please contact me at 412-344-2551.

Sincerely,


Wayne D. Fontana
State Senator, 42nd Senatorial District

CC: The Honorable Tom Wolf, Governor
The Honorable Jake Wheatley, Representative, 19th Legislative District
The Honorable Adam Ravensthal, Representative, 20th Legislative District
Ms. Cheryl Moon-Sirianni, District 11 Executive, PennDOT
The Honorable William Peduto, Mayor, City of Pittsburgh
The Honorable Daniel Gilman, Chief of Staff to Mayor, City of Pittsburgh
The Honorable Darlene Harris, Councilperson, City of Pittsburgh
The Honorable R. Daniel Lavelle, Councilperson, City of Pittsburgh
Mr. Mark Fatla, Esq., Executive Director, Northside Leadership Conference
Mr. Rudy Husband, Resident Vice President, Norfolk Southern Corporation



COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
HARRISBURG, PENNSYLVANIA 17120

OFFICE OF
SECRETARY OF TRANSPORTATION

September 6, 2018

Honorable Wayne D. Fontana
Senate of Pennsylvania
42nd Senatorial District
Senate Box 203042
Harrisburg, Pennsylvania 17120-3042

Dear Senator Fontana:

This is in response to your August 16, 2018, letter to Secretary Richards expressing your concerns regarding Norfolk Southern's (NS) overhead bridge clearance project.

I would like to take this opportunity to reinforce that the Department will be taking on a more active role in the project, rather than just administering the grant. I, along with Cheryl Moon-Sirianni (PennDOT District 11-0 Executive), made the commitment to you, and other state and locally elected officials that were present on August 21, 2018 at the NS Project Briefing, to take an active partnership position with NS to ensure that all parties are heard during the project development process. In addition to ensuring sound engineering design, we will also be providing oversight on the environmental process and public involvement/outreach activities. Resources within the corridor, such as the Allegheny Commons, will be given full consideration in the avoidance, minimization and mitigation of any potential impacts. In addition, we have been working with NS to develop a robust Public Involvement Plan to ensure that all stakeholders have an opportunity to be heard, be informed, and provide input in to the process.

Thank you for your input and we look forward to working with you and all stakeholders to reach a solution that benefits all parties.

Sincerely,

Jennie A. Granger, AICP
Deputy Secretary
Multimodal Transportation

cc: The Honorable Jake Wheatley, PA House of Representative
The Honorable Adam Ravensthal, PA House of Representative
The Honorable William Peduto, Mayor, City of Pittsburgh
The Honorable Daniel Gilman, Chief of Staff to Mayor, City of Pittsburgh
Ms. Darlene Harris, City of Pittsburgh
Mr. R. Daniel Lavelle, City of Pittsburgh
Mr. Mark Farla, Esq. Executive Director, Northside Leadership Conference
Mr. Rudy Husband, Vice President, Norfolk Southern Corp.
Ms. Cheryl Moon-Sirianni, District 11