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NEW ENGLAND DIVISION

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PUBLIC HEARING before the Connecticut
Department of Transportation, held at the The Colony
Conference Center, 51 Hartford Turnpike, Vernon,
Connecticut on Tuesday, November 21, 2000,
commencing at 1:00 p.m., concerning:

APPLICATION FOR A ROUTE 6 EXPRESSWAY CORRIDOR

BEFORE:

Larry Rosenberg, as Moderator

Colonel Brian E. Osterndorf, District Engineer

Susan K. Lee, Permit Project Officer

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P R O C E E D I N G S

MODERATOR ROSENBERG: Good afternoon.

VOICES: Good afternoon.

MODERATOR ROSENBERG: I'll give everybody a couple of minutes to sit down.

MODERATOR ROSENBERG: Good afternoon and welcome to this Public Hearing regarding the permit application from the Connecticut Department of Transportation for the proposed construction of the Route 6 Expressway.

My name is Larry Rosenberg. I'm the Chief of Public Affairs for the United States Army Corps of Engineers in New England. I'll be your moderator and your facilitator for this public hearing.

Our Hearing Officer today is Colonel Brian Osterndorf, our District Engineer for the US Army Corps of Engineers.

Should you need copies of the public notice, the hearing procedures or other pertinent information, it is available at the registration tables as you walked in.

I should point out that the Corps has

made no decision regarding the permit application in question.

The agenda for this public hearing is following this introduction, Colonel Osterndorf will address the hearing. He will be followed by the Connecticut Department of Transportation, who will discuss the permit application and their preferred alternative.

Before we begin, I would like to remind you of the importance of filling out those cards that were available at the door. These cards serve two purposes.

First, they let us know that you are interested in the permit so we can keep you informed; second, they provide me a list of those who wish to speak.

If you did not complete a form – a card, but wish to speak, or just receive future information, please go to the registration desk and fill out the card.

One additional comment. We are here to receive your comments, not to enter into any discussion of those comments, or to reach any conclusions. Any questions you have should be

directed to the record and not to the individuals on the panel.

Thank you.

Ladies and gentlemen, Colonel Osterndorf.

COLONEL OSTERNDORF: Thank you.

I will go ahead and read some things here, because what I do want to do is take some time to explain both the authorities that are vested in the Corps of Engineers to make a decision on this; and second, to explain a little bit the process that we are going to go through. As I had promised many of your elected leaders, ultimately we will make a decision. It is almost guaranteed that we are going to make some folks happy and, of course, some folks not very happy. And the one thing that you should all be at least satisfied with is that in undergoing our process, we will be true to it, and we will be faithful to those set of procedures, and so you will know that we have conducted this decision-making process in a fair and equitable manner.

So I would like to welcome you today to this hearing on the proposed construction of Route 6 between Bolton and Windham. I would like to thank

those of you that are here for being involved in the process.

I want you to feel free to bring up any type of topics that you feel need to be discussed for the record, and I'll assure you that all the comments that you will provide will be considered in our decision.

As Larry had said, I am Colonel Brian Osterndorf. I am Manager of the New England District of the Corps of Engineers, and we are headquartered in Concord, Massachusetts. I would like to go ahead and take a minute as well and introduce some of the other folks from the Corps as well today. The permit project officer for this is Susan Lee, who is seated there at the right-hand side, your right-hand side of the podium here.

Sitting down in the audience is Bob DeSista, who manages the program for our regulatory organization here for Connecticut and Rhode Island.

And seated to his right is Brian Valiton, who represents our office of counsel.

The hearing here is being conducted as part of our Corps regulatory program, and it's solely to listen to your comments. So let me go

ahead and review the authority and responsibilities that we have in this.

First, the Corps' jurisdiction is Section 404 of the Clean Water Act that regulates the discharge of dredged or fill materials in waters of the United States, and that is to include wetlands.

Secondly, the detailed regulations that explain the procedure for evaluating permit applications and unauthorized work is Title 33, the Code of Federal Regulations, Part 320 to 330, which was published in the November 13, 1986 Federal Register.

And, thirdly, the Corps' decision rests upon several important factors to include: In accordance with the Federal Clean Water Act; the project must comply with the 404(b)1 Guidelines, which are the federal environmental regulations governing the filling of and wetlands and must be in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act. That is NEPA. Any project that significantly affects the environment must have an Environmental Impact Statement. In this case, the Federal Highway Administration is the lead federal agency for the

preparation of the EIS.

Federal law requires that the Corps may only permit the least environmentally damaging practicable alternative. As you hear the term LEDPA, that is what that stands for, the least environmentally damaging practicable alternative. The Corps must evaluate alternatives to avoid or minimize impacts on waters and wetlands.

There are basically two final parts of the selection process here. An analysis is conducted of all alternatives to determine practicability, so that is step one. The alternatives that are presented are evaluated to make sure that they will provide for the project purpose. That is the practicable department.

And, secondly, the final alternative must be the least environmentally damaging to the environment. In determining practicability, the Corps considers such factors as cost, safety and community impacts. If these types of effects are severe, the Corps may rule out alternatives, even if they are less environmentally damaging. However, once all the practicable alternatives are determined, the Corps is required to permit only the

least environmentally damaging ones, that is based on impacts on the waters and wetlands.

After the least environmentally damaging practicable alternative has been determined, the Corps evaluates measures to further minimize and mitigate impacts, such as minor alignment shifts, bridging and reducing side slopes and median widths.

Finally, in accordance with the President's policy of no net loss of wetlands, we strive to mitigate in-kind for all unavoidable impacts.

Subsequent to the determination of a least environmentally damaging practicable alternative, the Corps conducts a broad-based public interest review.

All factors effecting the public will be included in our evaluation. Your comments will help us in reaching a decision.

The hearing today and the one that will be conducted tonight will be conducted in a manner so that all who desire to express their views will be given an opportunity to speak. To preserve the right of all to express their views, I would ask that they not be interrupted.

When you came in, copies of both the public notice and the procedures to be followed at this hearing were available. If you did not receive those, I would ask you to go back to the registration desk at the entrance of the auditorium and pick up a copy. I will not read either the hearing procedures or the public notice, but they will be entered into the record.

The record of this hearing will remain open, and written comments may be submitted to me today and tonight or by mail until December 1st, 2000. All comments whether they be presented here in person or whether they are received by mail will receive equal consideration.

As we all know, it has taken many, many years to get to this point. This is your opportunity to go ahead and speak to us about the concerns you have and/or interest you have regarding both the highway and the process itself. I want to reiterate that no decision has yet been made by the Corps of Engineers with regard to this permit. And it's my responsibility to evaluate both the environmental and socioeconomic impacts prior to my decision. And in order to accomplish that, we need

your input.

So I thank you for your involvement. Thank you for being here today. I would like to turn it back over to the moderator then now to entertain the first set of speakers.

MODERATOR ROSENBERG: Thank you, sir.

Our first speaker tonight will be the permit applicant, who will give an overview of the project and a description of their preferred alternative.

Ned Hurle.

NED HURLE: Thank you, Larry.

Good afternoon, Colonel and ladies and gentlemen. My name is Ned Hurle, and I am the Director of Environmental Planning for the Connecticut Department of Transportation.

The first part of my presentation today will be a brief overview of this project and the highway alignment that the department has submitted to the Corps of Engineers.

The second segment will summarize the general impacts of the Department's preferred alignment, Alternative 133B and why we feel Alternative 133B is the least environmentally

damaging practicable alternative. I have submitted detailed testimony, and so this will be a summary.

By way of general background, I won't go all the way back to the beginning of time, but since 1990, DOT, the Corps and our other federal and state and local partners have worked long and hard to find an acceptable solution to the transportation problems in the Route 6 corridor. Unfortunately, we have not been able to achieve consensus.

In 1997, Governor Rowland met with H. Martin Lancaster, Assistant Secretary of the Army for civil works. They agreed to form a committee consisting of representatives of the Corps, the State of Connecticut and Congressman Gejdenson's office to seek a permissible solution. This effort resulted in a new alignment known as Alternative 133A, which the Department submitted to the Corps in March of 1998.

Unfortunately, there remained concerns regarding the permissibility of this alignment, and the application was withdrawn.

In 1999, the towns of Andover, Bolton, Columbia, Manchester and Windham asked the Department of Transportation to investigate

environmentally sensitive modifications to Alternative 133A that might make the project permittable. The result was Alternative 133A modified, which was submitted to the Corps in October of 1999. Subsequently, the Department has made revisions to Alternative 133A Mod renaming it Alternative 133B.

At the request of the Army Corps of Engineers, the Department included two additional alignments as supplemental information to the current Section 404 permit application. Revisions were made to previously studied alternatives in order to more fairly compare impacts between alignments and to aid in determining the LEDPA. This new permit application, the subject of tonight or today's public hearing includes Alternative 133B, which I emphasize is the State of Connecticut's recommended alternative also includes Alternative 133A - excuse me - 133 modified and Alternative 133/18-25 modified. All three alternatives share an identical alignment in the western portion of the study area. The differences between them all occur in the eastern half of the study area.

The Department has provided large-scale

graphics of the alternatives in the room immediately adjacent to this hearing room. Staff from my office are available to show or discuss the precise location of the alignments. And that – and those – that mapping will be available throughout the remainder of the hearing this afternoon and tonight.

The common portion of the alignments run from the I-384 interchange at Bolton, north of existing Route 6. It enters Coventry crossing Ash Brook and Skungamaug River. The common alignment portion ends in the vicinity of the Coventry/Andover town line.

Alternative 133B continues on a path north of the Hop River across from Bear Swamp Brook and reentering Coventry. It ties into the existing Route 6 expressway section in Coventry at the Route 66 interchange.

From the Coventry/Andover town line at the point where the common alignments diverge, and Alternative 133 progressed northward, Alternative 133 modified and 133/18-25 modified, turned to the south. The alignments cross over the Hop River and Route 6 and curve eastward. The alignments cross over Route 87 and proceed easily into Columbia. At

a point east of Whitney Road, Alternative 133 modified and 133-18/25 modified separate. Alternative 133 mod curves to the north then crosses over Route 6 immediately crossing into Coventry and over the Hop River. The alignment curves easterly and ties into the existing Route 6 expressway.

At the point – at the divergent point – divergence point, Alternative 133/18-25 Mod follows a route parallel to existing Route 6 then crosses over the Hop River and back into Coventry, where it ties into the existing Route 6 expressway.

The remainder of the presentation will deal with the impacts associated with the alternative.

The impacts associated with Alternative 133B are reasonable, considering the benefits of the expressway, the scale of the project, the resources being affected, minimization efforts and proposed mitigation to offset unavoidable impacts.

Section 404(b)1 Guidelines set out environmental criteria for issuing 404 permits. As noted earlier, the Department has prepared a detailed analysis that documents why Alternative 133B is the least environmentally damaging practicable alternative;

and as I said, we have submitted that.

The most prominent and valuable water resource in the study area as indicated in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement, the Supplemental Draft Impact Statement and as indicated by our state DEP is the Hop River. Alternative 133B avoids the river and follows a more northerly path to avoid the Hop River Valley. Are although there are no federally listed species or protected species utilized in the study area, there are three species of special concern in the State of Connecticut, one turtle and two snakes. These species are concentrated in the Hop River Valley and will not be threatened by Alternative 133B. Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection has expressed serious concerns in the past with any freeway alignment crossing the Hop River.

Another concern is upland forested habitat. Alignment 133B avoids most of the forest lots and their core areas. Impacts occur mostly along edges and not through the blocks. Although federal resource agencies repeatedly raise concerns over the upland forest of the study area, they are not rare or unique and are not of greater importance

than the Hop River and its associated high value aquatic resources. Forest lot impacts are not unique to 133B. Southerly alignments also cut forest habitat blocks while also affecting wetlands of higher function and value and the resources of the Hop River Valley. The majority of wetlands affected by 133B are providing less valuable wetland functions, particularly for aquatic, wildlife and water quality protection compared to southerly alignments.

The northerly alignment minimizes impacts to residences and neighborhoods.

Southerly alignments nearly double impacts to residences and introduce avoidable impacts to businesses in Andover and Columbia.

Water quality protection will be enhanced by avoiding wetlands and river crossings and by using best available technology and management practices. While similar management practices would be used on any new alignment avoiding the largest river, such as the Hop River is the best approach at protecting water quality from degradation. The alignments crossing rivers on bridges introduce more risk of contamination and

require greater level of design and treatment to protect roadway runoff from direct discharge to the water course.

Entirely new design concepts were applied to 133B to minimize impacts to the environment. Independent roadways with wide medians and reduced direct footprint impact and help wildlife movement. Bridges over particular or important water courses reduce wetland and water course impact and also reverse impacts to riparian, wildlife and fisheries corridors.

The proposed wildlife overpass is a new, better approach to accommodate wildlife movement. The 133B alignment in conjunction with impact minimization mitigation commitments have reduced direct wetland impacts from the original 77 acres previously denied by the Corps to approximately 37 acres.

Perhaps the most singular difference between the alternatives is their impact on the human environment. Alternative 133B would impact 26 residences and no businesses. Alternative 133 Mod would impact 44 residences and one business, and Alternative 133/18-25 would impact 53 residences and

four businesses.

There are no direct impacts to historic properties by any of the alternatives; however, the State Historic Preservation Officer has indicated that Alternative 133B would be acceptable under the provisions of the National Historic Preservation Act.

ConnDOT has committed to using latest and best availability technology to protect the environment, neighborhood, wildlife, water quality and meet the capacity and safety improvement needs of the transportation corridor.

Southerly Route 6 alignments are not less damaging practical alternatives to Alternative 133B. While all alternatives will affect human and natural resources, the intensity of impacts vary. With regard to resources and considerations under the Corps' jurisdiction, 133B has less impact to the aquatic environment and human environment and does not cause other significant adverse environmental impacts.

Thank you.

MODERATOR ROSENBERG: Thank you.

Before we begin with the public comment,

I would like to remind all that the Connecticut Commission on the Deaf and Hearing Impaired is here tonight; and if you need such assistance, please let myself or someone at the registration desk know, and we will take care of that for you.

Ladies and gentlemen, it is crucial to this public process that your voice is heard, and we are here to listen, to listen to your comments, to understand your concerns, and to provide you an opportunity to put your thoughts on the record should you care to do so.

In order to make any decisions regarding this permit application, we, the Corps of Engineers, need to hear from you, the individuals most affected by the project.

Sir, if there is no objection, I would like to dispense with the reading of the public notice and have it entered into the record.

Thank you, sir.

A transcript of this hearing is being made to ensure a detailed review of all the comments. A copy of the transcript will be available at our Concord, Massachusetts headquarters for review. We are also trying to make arrangements

to have that put on our website, or you can make arrangements with the stenographer for your copy at your own expense.

When making a statement, please come forward to the microphone and state your name and the interest you represent. As there are many who wish to provide comments this afternoon, this afternoon you will be provided three minutes to speak, no more.

The traffic signal in the front will indicate the following: The green light will come on indicating two minutes remaining; the amber light indicates one minute left, and the red light indicates your time has expired.

Please identify if you are speaking for or representing a position of an organization. If you are speaking as an individual, please say so.

I want to emphasize that all who wish to speak will have an opportunity to do so.

For your convenience, a stenographer is available outside the hall should you wish to dictate a statement for the record, rather than making the formal presentation. These statements, as you heard, these statements along with any

written statements submitted today or by December 1st will receive equal treatment and equal consideration with those presented here.

We will now receive your comments according to those here in protocol which were passed out at the door. If you have a lengthy written statement, once again, please summarize it to fit the three-minute limitation, and the entire statement will be submitted for the record.

Our first speaker is State Representative Pam Sawyer. She will be followed by Senator Edith Prague.

SENATOR EDITH PRAGUE: Prague.

MODERATOR ROSENBERG: Prague. Thank you, ma'am.

SENATOR EDITH PRAGUE: You're welcome.

REPRESENTATIVE PAM SAWYER: Thank you, Mr. Rosenberg, Colonel and Ms. Lee.

I have been a long-standing supporter of the Route 6 expressway, and I am here to tell you today that I'm also in great support for 133B.

One of the things that I have noticed when I went through the matrix was that there are statistically insignificant differences in most of

the categories. I really feel that in this case we are looking at apples to apples, but one of the outstanding features that I find in looking at the matrix, the one that stands out is the crossing of the Hop River. We have a situation where we have fairly dry uplands, and we have a very fragile Class A waterway.

In the case of looking at the uplands, and we are talking about building a road that is 12.4 miles long, it would be one-half of a mile shorter; and when we look at the balance between the water and clean air, we must take into consideration that extra half mile, if you are going to look at southerly routes.

When you put people on for another half mile, you're going to find that they not only will be on the road longer, they will be creating more air pollution, but it will also be the threat to crossing the largest waterway in the area.

When you go back and you look at the small waterways, the small streams, you will find that there is no moratorium on home building; and if we do not build this expressway very carefully with the animal crossings, with the closed drainage

systems, that the houses, they will come, and there will be crossings of these streams. They will either be done by developers or by the towns. So when we look at the overall balance at this stage for Connecticut's development, it is crucial that we build this road, that we build it in the most environmentally sensitive way, there is no question, but we also must look at the practicability — yellow light — practicability that it says to me, we have a situation that we should build the least expensive, the most carefully built road, and I would like to just leave one demonstration, because the animal crossings have come into question, and there has been great success in Florida, if I may, Colonel.

I found to be in great support of these animal crossings, which are large boxed culverts after finding out what would happen in Florida for I-75. When they built I-75, the then Commissioner of DEP agreed and was very supportive to put forward animal crossings to allow the riparian corridors to be connected. They put 23 animal crossings in Florida, and this is trip photography courtesy of the Florida Fish and Game, and it shows the fox, the

Florida bear and particularly the panther, which was an endangered species and has extremely successful.

So I believe, Colonel, this is another piece of evidence I would like to leave for your department.

Thank you, sir.

MODERATOR ROSENBERG: Senator.

SENATOR EDITH PRAGUE: Thank you.

MODERATOR ROSENBERG: And you will be followed by Tony Guglielmo, who will be — yeah, Tony Guglielmo will follow you.

SENATOR EDITH PRAGUE: Good afternoon. We have met before.

For the record, I am Senator Edith Prague, representing the 19th district. I want to begin my testimony with commending the Department on the current Route 6 construction project, which has made remarkable changes to Route 6 and has given us a much safer road. Safety has been the primary concern along Route 6, and what is happening with the present construction is answering that huge problem.

For years, I have been advocating for a system of public transportation, a multimodal system

that will allow people to leave their cars at home, a well-planned system that could take some freight off of our roads, a system that would reduce pollution and global warming. Time is beginning to run out. Our roads are jammed. Pollution increases minute by minute. Health issues have become critical. Our population is aging with several thousand seniors not being able to get from here to there, and the Department of Transportation only concerns itself with paving over our forests, our wetlands and devastating communities.

People in Columbia, where I live, are demanding that you dare not approve 133mod or 133/18-25mod. Both of these roads would absolutely devastate our community, not only devastate homes, but devastate our business area.

The people of Coventry are once again asking you not to approve a road like 133B that would jam through the Nathan Hale Forest, that would run through Coventry and change their whole way of life. I am voicing my objection to these three plans and urge the Department to do what it should be doing, what it should be doing for the future of our state and for the future of our environment, and

that is to put their energy into a system of public transportation to relieve our transportation problems.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify. This is very serious business for us in Eastern Connecticut, and I hope you will take the remarks of people who will be devastated by your proposals very seriously.

Thank you.

MODERATOR ROSENBERG: Thank you.

(Applause.)

MODERATOR ROSENBERG: Please hold — there is really no need for applause for any position. We are giving — listening to comments from all.

Our next speaker is State Senator Tony Guglielmo, and he will be followed by Representative Walter Pawelkiewicz.

SENATOR ANTHONY GUGLIELMO: We have difficult names here in Eastern Connecticut.

MODERATOR ROSENBERG: Thank you, Senator.

SENATOR ANTHONY GUGLIELMO: My name is Tony Guglielmo. I am a State Senator for the 35th

district, and I am opposed to the expressway.

I was involved in 1980-82 when I was a candidate for Congress. At that point, I did favor the expressway. We were trying to connect Hartford with Providence. That was the idea. The information we had then, and I believe it was correct, that Providence and Hartford were the only two capitals in the lower 48 states that were not connected by a major highway so it made some sense.

Rhode Island back then pulled out, however, because of the environmental reasons, and then in most people's opinion, the reason for it disappeared because you were going to have a highway that went to the Rhode Island line and stopped. Then the issue died with that additional idea, and then it resurfaced again recently with the safety issues. Of course, we are all concerned about safety. There is no question about that. The question is how does an expressway make it more safe.

When you think about it, Route 6 doesn't disappear with the expressway. It still exists. So that means that people will be still using Route 6. The difficulty on Route 6 has been at least a

serious accident and death has occurred when the traffic is light, not when it's heavy, mostly on weekends and in the evenings. You could actually make a case for the fact that the expressway would make Route 6 less safe, because if there is less traffic, thus higher speeds. Higher speeds in the past have equaled death and serious injury. And so I think when you – when you evaluate this that you have to keep in mind that Route 6 still exists. It will not disappear with the expressway.

Incidentally, about 75 percent of the deaths on Route 6 are drunken driving related deaths. So that is an enforcement problem. That is not a highway design problem.

And also, I think it's important to note that most of the growth in Eastern Connecticut has not occurred in this area. It has occurred in the Groton/New London area, because of the casinos, because of Mystic Seaport, because of the aquarium, and that is where I think we should be focusing our highway goal.

So in short, I think the expressway is environmentally damaging. I think it's expensive, and I think it is not needed. What we need to do is

have better enforcement and continue with the improvements on Route 6 so that the new enforcement methods can be effective.

And, incidentally, we have a new Public Safety Commissioner who has made it his top priority, traffic, Arthur Spada, as some of you have noted in the paper has decided that that is going to be the number one focus of the Connecticut State Police. It has not been so in the past. So I think that bodes well for us getting better enforcement on Route 6 and helping to improve the situation.

Thank you for your time.

MODERATOR ROSENBERG: Thank you, sir.

Next speaker is Walter Pawelkiewicz. He will be represented, I understand, by John Lescoe.

JOHN LESCOE: Right. Thank you very much.

Walter Pawelkiewicz cannot be here today because of a family commitment out of state.

My name is John Lescoe, First Selectman, Town of Windham. I would like to enter his testimony.

Dear Colonel Osterndorf and members of the Army Corps of Engineers:

Please let me take this opportunity to thank you for your site visit and meeting with local officials on January 25, the year 2000. As you and your staff are well aware, the people of Windham and Eastern Connecticut have patiently waited for resolution of the various pathways for the Route 6 bypass parkway for over 35 years.

The Route 6 Expressway Section 404 permit application eloquently outlines the superiority of Alternative 133B in dealing with the issues of safety, social, economic and environmental factors. I unequivocally support Alternative 133B as the solution to "Suicide Six" and urge you to objectively review this route based on the merits of the proposal as presented. I believe the safety of the people who travel this road on a daily basis needs to be recognized and dealt with in a timely, measured and fair process.

I want to urge you and your staff to reject any upgrades and note that three communities, Bolton, Andover and Columbia all support 133B, which balances social, aquatic and ecological impacts. As a Representative of the 49th District, Windham-Willimantic, and a member of the

Legislature's Transportation Committee, I urge you to identify Alternative 133B as the optimal choice in completing the Andover to Windham corridor.

Please contact me if you need further assistance in resolving these important issues.

Sincerely, Walter M. Pawelkiewicz, State Representative.

MODERATOR ROSENBERG: Thank you, sir.

Our next speaker is David Rhineland, and David will be followed by Joan Lewis.

DAVID RHINELANDER: Colonel and Ms. Lee, ladies and gentlemen.

My name is David Rhineland. I am a Selectman in the Town of Andover, and I have been designated by the Board of Selectmen to be the spokesman on the Route 6 issue. The Board consistently has voted to support the bypass entirely north of the Hop River, 133B and its predecessors. Our position is on the record with the Corps.

Furthermore, the townspeople of Andover have twice voted overwhelmingly at public hearings to favor the bypass that stays north of the Hop River, about 80 percent in favor of it each time.

It is interesting that no group in Connecticut, no state agency, no town, no commission, no issues group has come out in favor of the two other alternatives on the table today, 133 modified and 133/18-25.

While all of us commend the State Department of Transportation for the ongoing safety upgrades to the present Route 6, the Corps and others have said that the upgrades do not and cannot overcome the deficiency of Route 6, which remains a two-lane country highway that also serves as Andover's Main Street.

The same is true of the stepped up enforcement efforts by the Connecticut State Police, commendable, but not a permanent solution to a dangerous transportation bottleneck.

Thus, all of the attention today, as it should be, is on 133B, building it or not having any expressway at all. Route 6 is overburdened with a mix of local and through traffic. The 18-wheelers and the streams of commuters that use the road daily don't care. They don't even know whether they are passing through Andover, or Bolton, or Columbia on their way between Manchester and Willimantic and

points beyond.

But we care. Among other things, I am an EMT in Andover, and I unfortunately have vivid images of both the accidents on Route 6 and the lines of trucks and out-of-town automobiles that come to a halt as we package up the injured and clean up the debris.

You will hear detailed discussions of the economic and the environmental impact of the proposal during the day. Unfortunately, an expressway cannot be built without altering the land and the communities that traverse it. We believe that the state's highway designers have done a superb job in lessening the impact of the roadway with the modifications that have become incorporated in 133B.

Eastern Connecticut has needed this 12-mile highway connector for years, and it needs it even more as the region grows. The local towns need the issue settled so we can plot our residential and commercial and industrial growth. Our townspeople who live in the path of one or the other of these proposed roads need to know what is in store for them.

So on behalf of the Town of Andover, I urge you to become advocates of 133B and help us as quickly as possible win its approval.

Thank you.

MODERATOR ROSENBERG: Thank you, sir.

Joan Lewis, Chairperson, Coventry Town Council.

She will be followed by James Clark of Coventry.

JOAN LEWIS: Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the application by the Department of Transportation to construct an expressway 6.

I am Joan Lewis, and I serve as the Chairman of the Coventry Town Council. I am here this afternoon to represent the Town Council's official position on this application on behalf of our community.

As President Reagan aptly stated, "Well, here we go again," DOT is once again applying for a permit in their never-ending quest to connect the Manchester Route 6 bypass to the Willimantic Route 6 bypass.

After each study, enormous expense of

taxpayer funds, and emotional toil to the corridor citizens, they keep asking for the same alignment. The Coventry Town Council and citizens of Coventry think it is time to end this fruitless quest and time to rethink a 30-year concept.

We have reviewed and analyzed the application of the 404 permit, and based upon the public record feel that the Army Corps of Engineers has the responsibility to deny this permit for Alternative 133B. It is not the least environmentally damaging practicable alternative.

While the Route 6 issue is no less emotional to our community than that of our neighbors, we have attempted to root out the truth through a scientific approach and have based our opinion on these facts. We called upon our land use and administrative agencies to review both the legal process and the environmental data in the chronology. The findings of these reviews are attached for your review. I think you will find that our efforts are significant and well-founded.

We also went one step further to bring in professionals to undertake an independent peer review of DOT's application. It is based upon this

information which we share with you today that will demonstrate that the purpose and needs do not justify the environmental and social impacts and that the environmental methodology utilized by DOT's consultants does not utilize current wetlands and environmental evaluation methodology. Their analysis fails to define a valuation criteria, instead using arbitrary standards, which produce biased results. A conclusion based on bad foundation data is as flawed as a road built without adequate base material. Both are doomed to failure.

The very premise of DOT's quest should be questioned. In a Don Quixote-like field they have charged into our Coventry landscape for the past 30 years trying to build a road with little avail, trying to pave over the birthplace of the Halliday Windmill. The quest should have ended with the death of the interstate connection to Providence. The two existing Route 6 bypasses, one of Manchester and one of Willimantic, served their function well. We do not need a Nathan Hale Forest bypass any more than we need a Chaplin bypass.

So the quest goes on not recognizing that Connecticut employment patterns have changed

over the last 30 years. American Thread has closed, and Willimantic will never have the same level of employment. Jobs have also shifted out of the Hartford region to Middletown and Cromwell, like Pratt and Whitney and Aetna. The two largest employers in Eastern Connecticut are now the casinos in the Norwich area. None of these trends are recognized by the 30-year-old plan, and no one driving to the new economic region will be served by an expressway 6.

MODERATOR ROSENBERG: Excuse me. Your time is up.

JOHN TWERDY: Mr. Chairman. I'll give her my three minutes, Mr. Chairman, if that is allowed.

My name is John Twerdy. I am a resident of Pucker Street, and I am adversely affected by this, and now my son is so I will forgo my three minutes so —

MODERATOR ROSENBERG: I understand that, sir.

JOHN TWERDY: Excuse me.

MODERATOR ROSENBERG: I understand that and, ma'am, if would you like to come up when his

name is called, that is fine, but we have to stick by this. There is many that want to speak.

Thank you.

Our next speaker is James Clark, and he will be followed by George Logan, also Town of Coventry.

JAMES CLARK: Thank you, Colonel and Ms. Lee.

In continuing our conversation, we are not alone in criticizing the state for a lack of transportation vision. The Connecticut Regional Institute for the 21st century criticized the state for a lack of infrastructure planning to the emerging economic outlook.

In response to this report, the Connecticut Home Builders Association proposed that I-691 be extended to Route 2 to provide an alternate east-west corridor to I-95, and that is Exhibit 1.

Wouldn't it be logical to extend this linkage 13 miles further to connect Willimantic to Route 2? This corridor to Route 2 would provide the necessary linkage to today's jobs in central and southeastern Connecticut and a viable trucking route from New York to Providence. And that is Exhibit 2.

It is difficult for a bureaucracy to abandon a 30-year idea of connecting point A to point B in a railroad-like fashion. Roads replace rails due to their flexibility as society's needs change. The original purpose of the expressway has not been examined since abandonment of its original objective of expressway access to Providence. In fact, the proposed alignments will not serve the corridor towns since no midpoint interchange is proposed, nor will be allowed.

This connector will induce suburbanization and promote sprawl in the East Coast, last green valley, east of Windham. Is this a purpose in line with the emerging philosophy of smart growth, or even consistent with the state's plan of conservation and development?

The region's transportation needs should be fully reexamined before any permit is issued. The potential impact of any of these developments has not been adequately reviewed. Project need is discussed in terms of safety and capacity. Both issues need to be seriously reviewed. Capacity is based on traffic volumes and road designs. Many of the design flaws have been and are scheduled for

improvement through the much appreciated efforts of the DOT's current Route 6 enhancement project.

Capacity should also look at population growth. According to the State of Connecticut Department of Health, the Windham region population, especially Windham, has declined since the 1990 census. And that is Exhibit 3.

The growth in the region along the Route 44 and Route 2 corridors, Route 6 has adequate capacity in comparison to similar two-lane roads. The issue of safety is complex, looking at the accident rate data for roads in the region between 1989 and 1993. It is surprising to note that the accident rate on Route 31 in Coventry is almost twice that of Route 6; Route 32 in Mansfield, 40 percent greater; and Route 44 in Coventry, 30 percent greater. And that is Exhibit 4.

The Route 6 accident rate is also 25 percent below state-wide averages for two-lane rural highways. However, we recognize that accident rates only tell part of the story.

MODERATOR ROSENBERG: Thank you, sir.

Our next speaker is George Logan, also representing the County of Coventry. He will be

followed by Leigh Ann Hutchinson.

MODERATOR ROSENBERG: Thank you, sir.

GEORGE LOGAN: Good afternoon, Colonel,
Ms. Lee.

As it appears, I'm not going to have a lot of time to go through my summary there. There will be a report that I will be providing for this process at a later time, but I thought I would highlight some of the issues here.

I am an environmental scientist employed with Green Ecological Services and speaking on behalf of the Town of Coventry.

Much of the data that I have looked through, which is provided or referred to as far as this application, I found to be incomplete and basically out of date.

Potential indirect impacts to wetland and aquatic resources both the ones that are short term and long-term, obviously directly related with the severity in the amount of cut and fill. However, I did not find an analysis presented that compares the various alternates using this basic landscape level tool, or aspects of environmental planning.

Regarding water quality, there is a report that provides some valuable information; however, there is no update of this report. That comes with alignments. There is no what we would call a watershed-based impact analysis. It would require more information in order to look at these impacts. There are certain elements in their modeling that are missing. Certain constituencies of stormwater runoff. When it comes to impacts to wetlands and aquatic resources, they use a valid approach, and that is the acreage that is lost; however, I'm afraid that indirect impacts are of more concern in this particular case, and I found that there is insufficient analysis for indirect impacts from any of the alignments.

There are many problems that I have found in their analysis of functions and values, and I will elaborate on the report of why there are certain functions that are considered to be absent, but if you go to their data, you can see that they couldn't possibly have reached that conclusion based on their own data.

Water quality impacts from construction should be looked at; and then, of course, impacts to

wildlife, that is one particular concern that seems to be somewhat of a misguided emphasis on forest blocks and the Corps looking to force their interior species. The data tells us there are actually more decline and more problems in peril for other types of species that are not considered in the open lands and open fields, for instance.

Some of the assumptions in the data that is used there is not correct. I won't go into analysis, but this is on wildlife. For instance, they say the neomigrant birds are in decline. That is not true. All the data show the opposite. There are several wildlife overpasses and underpasses that are being provided. We are not told why they are putting them in that particular location. There is no signs that come with it to tell us these actually work in our region. Florida is fine, but this is not Florida. This is New England.

Impacts to listed species, there seems to be lack of evidence, particularly on endangered, threatened or special concerned species for homological and botanical resources that I didn't find.

I guess my time is over.

Thank you.

MODERATOR ROSENBERG: Thank you, sir.

The next speaker is Leigh Ann Hutchinson from Andover, and She will be followed by Mr. Douglas Thompson from the Environmental Protection Agency.

Ms. Hutchinson.

(No response.)

MODERATOR ROSENBERG: I'll call her later.

Our next speaker will be Mr. Doug Thompson from the Environmental Protection Agency from Region 1, and he will be followed by Darby Pollansky from the Coventry Planning and Zoning Commission.

DOUGLAS THOMPSON: Thank you.

Good afternoon. My name is Douglas Thompson, and I am here on behalf of the US Environmental Protection Agency. EPA thanks the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the Connecticut Department of Transportation for an opportunity to present our views about this important project.

While there will be different perspectives voiced by those who appear before you

today and tonight about the best way to proceed, many may be united in feeling discouraged to yet another Route 6 hearing with no clear resolution in site.

Calvin Coolidge used to speak about the "importance of the obvious," and several things are obvious about the Route 6 case.

First, all of the alternatives examined inevitably raise concern about impacts to natural resources and to the communities of Andover, Bolton, Coventry and Columbia. If a painless solution existed, we would have found it a long time ago.

Second, the US Army Corps of Engineers, the US Fish and Wildlife Service and EPA have unequivocally and repeatedly found that alternatives located wholly to the north of existing Route 6 – what I will refer to as the northern corridor – would violate federal environmental standards and be ineligible to receive a Clean Water Act permit.

Third, the application now before the Corps called Alternative 133B, unfortunately does not differ markedly from previously rejected proposals. It involves the same type of project, a four-lane limited access divided highway in

virtually the same location. Not surprisingly, its environmental impacts are similar to those alternatives already found ineligible for approval. Because of the significance of the environmental impacts and the existence of less damaging, less environmentally damaging alternatives, the Corps denied the permit for a northern route in 1989.

In the ensuing decade and under the leadership of various Corps district engineers and EPA regional administrators, the Corps considered other northern proposals with the same result each time. And now there is Alternative 133B, which while incorporating some measures aimed at reducing adverse impacts does not address the fundamental environmental problems that led to the earlier permit denial. For those who genuinely wish to find a way to improve the safety of Route 6 and meet environmental standards, where do we go from here?

EPA fully appreciates that the existing Route 6 has been unsafe. The record shows the problem not to be so much the accident rate, which historically has been below the state-wide average for this type of road, but the accidents have varied, which is a serious concern.

The legion of options considered over the years to address safety problems on Route 6 fall into four general categories: Make improvements to the existing road; construct a new road to the north; construct a new road to the south; or construct a hybrid option.

Let me underscore that EPA remains open to considering any options, other than those which involve the same type of project within the same corridor denied a federal permit in 1989. For a variety of reasons, the north/south hybrid option may offer the most hope.

And let me, with time being up, let me just close by saying that EPA does care about the safety issues on Route 6. Likewise, the Connecticut Department of Transportation, we believe, is generally concerned about the environmental protection, and we believe we should look towards the legitimacy of each interest in finding a way to satisfy both.

Thank you.

MODERATOR ROSENBERG: Thank you.

Our next speaker, Darby Pollansky from the Coventry Planning and Zoning Commission. She

will be followed by John Elsesser, the Town Manager from the Town of Coventry.

DARBY POLLANSKY: Hi. My name is Darby Pollansky. I am the Chairman of the Planning and Zoning Commission in Coventry, and I would like to read a letter in that represents my Commission's opinion.

This letter reflects the sincere opinion of the Coventry Planning and Zoning Commission in regards to the concept of any highway system to be located within the area of the existing Route 6, more specifically the proposed Alternative 133B. The CPZC, which stands for the Coventry Planning and Zoning Commission, stands firm on the fact that environmental, social, and planning impacts will be irreparable, irreversible and completely adverse.

Every town in the State of Connecticut is required by state statute to provide a Plan of Conservation and Development, which also must be updated every ten years. The Town of Coventry's Plan of Conservation and Development specifically states opposition to a highway of any form within the existing Route 6 corridor. The Coventry Planning and Zoning Commission recommends and

supports upgrades to the existing Route 6 which are being implemented and are providing significant improvements to the safety issues as well as all other matters. The impacts of upgrades to the existing Route 6 are insignificant as opposed to the impacts of a new highway.

From a planning perspective, new highway construction is entirely inappropriate, irresponsible and unnecessary. Back in the early '60s, when the idea of a new highway was born, the intent was to construct a highway from Hartford, Connecticut to Providence, Rhode Island. Because of various major impacts, this concept was abandoned. We would all hope that it isn't because of politics and the hunger for financial gain of certain entities, that this highway concept has been plaguing the Towns of Bolton, Andover, Coventry and Columbia. The Substantial basis for a new highway has long been deceased. There are no gains to the planning aspects of a new highway that would even come close to providing support to any proposal, much less for Alternative 133B. Long-term transportation needs, water supply and population growth in the location of Willimantic are minimal

and prove that a new highway is not needed. This is reflected in OPM's Connecticut long range population projections for water supply and transportation planning purposes. To sacrifice the environment and all other impacts for such a small gain is unconscionable. Without provision for off-ramps into the surrounding towns along the highway extends the thought that the only importance of business and economic growth is in Willimantic. Safety issues exist on other state roads, such as Route 44, Route 32 and Route 195. Should highways be built to address those areas as well?

DOT has failed to provide up-to-date data that remotely substantiates the application before you. As a combined Planning and Zoning Commission, we are statutorily mandated to require specific components to applications of individual landowners. It would be unprofessional, irresponsible and arbitrary to accept such an incomplete application. Long-term impacts have been completely ignored. With any proposal for a highway, construction is estimated to be at least ten years. DOT must be required to provide a complete application in order for it to even be

considered. Most importantly, DOT must provide data to support their application that comes from studies of the late '90s, not the late '80s.

The Connecticut Planning and Zoning Commission believes that any highway proposal should be entirely eliminated from the drawing board. The CPZC feels that DOT should accept responsibility for the existing Route 6 corridor and continue with the improvements and upgrades to Route 6. The devastation this highway game has caused to the community is humiliating and unconscionable. The purpose and need of DOT for this alternative application of 133B is unfounded, unsubstantiated and circumvents laws and regulations established by the State of Connecticut to protect the environmentally sensitive areas impacted. This is simply bad planning; the impact short term and long term far outweigh the gains.

The Coventry Planning and Zoning Commission respectfully requests that you deny the DOT's application for Alternative 133B.

MODERATOR ROSENBERG: Your time is up.

DARBY POLLANSKY: The CPZC also requests that this decision be expressed in writing and that

DOT be required to eliminate any further search for creating a need for any form of a highway system in the areas surrounding the existing Route 6. It's time to move on and plan for a more successful future.

Thank you.

MODERATOR ROSENBERG: Thank you.

The next speaker is John Elsesser, Town Manager, Town of Coventry, who will be followed by Carmen Vance, Resident Chair, Columbia School Board.

Mr. Elsesser.

JOHN ELSESSER: Thank you.

John Elsesser, Town Manager, Coventry.

I will continue Coventry's testimony.

Today's hearing is called for the purpose of selecting the least environmentally damaging practical alternative. We believe that the application is incomplete, biased and flawed. The National Environmental Policy Act, paragraph 1507.4 calls upon the application to present the environmental impacts of the proposal and alternatives in a comparable form providing a clear basis for choice of options by the decision-makers of the public and shall vigorously explore and

objectively evaluate and devote substantial treatment for each alternative.

The application for 133B fails to meet this federal test. Once again, the quest to put an expressway near or along the original alignment only pays lip service to the intent of the process. It must first be pointed out the Connecticut DOT stating that this round, when you heard it today, of Route 6's quest is based upon the request of several towns. We are enclosing a letter from the town dated July 28, 1999, marked as received by DOT on August 4, 1999, Exhibit 7. Yet, Connecticut DOT consultants had a scope already prepared to do the work on July the 27th, one day before the letter was even sent.

The objective of this study was that the modification to the alignment and profiles could not significantly deviate from the previous corridor such that a new Environmental Impact Statement must be prepared. This study created 133B, and by the severe restrictions placed upon it to avoid a new impact study, it may not be the least environmentally damaging. In fact, it wasn't until August 26th that Commissioner James Sullivan

notified the towns of a permit to undertake the study. Exhibit 9.

This letter also details that the Corps and – quoted from Commissioner Sullivan, the Corps and EPA are unanimous in their opposition to the northerly alignment of the Route 6 corridor. Commissioner Sullivan also points out that, quote, our appeals to Washington have been – Washington have been fruitless. We can surmise that failing to accomplish an end run around the New England Division of Army Corps and EPA. We have asked certain towns in favor of the preferred alignment to ask for additional briefings. This is far from the standards of objectives. The Town of Coventry was not privy to this process and was not allowed any input into the process until it was presented. We will continue with our next speaker.

MODERATOR ROSENBERG: Thank you.

Our next speaker is Carmen Vance from Columbia, Resident Chair of the Columbia School Board, who will be followed by Ed Johnston, Columbia Planning and Zoning Commission.

CARMEN VANCE: My name is Carmen Vance, Chair of the Columbia Board of Education.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak this afternoon.

Currently, in Columbia are we are struggling to finance the education of our children, because our budget is almost all on the backs of individual homeowners. We are a very small community, but we are trying to develop our commercial properties. Any highway that goes south of the Hop River will take many more homes than the other alternatives and Columbia's commercial zone taking existing businesses and preventing future commercial development. That is why I urge you to choose Alternative 133B, if you must build a superhighway.

Thank you.

MODERATOR ROSENBERG: Thank you, ma'am.

The next speaker, Ed Johnston, Columbia Planning and Zoning Commission.

He will be followed by Lori Mathieu, Chairman of the IWA. Darby Pollansky will be speaking for her.

ED JOHNSTON: Good afternoon.

At its October 24th regular meeting the Columbia Planning and Zoning Commission discussed

the Connecticut DOT application for construction of a Route 6 expressway and unanimously voted in favor of support of Alternative 133B.

Alternative 133/18-25mod would destroy a prime portion of Columbia's limited commercial and manufacturing zones, and there are no suitable substitute sites for these two zones and their related economic activities.

In addition, this alternative would eliminate current viable growing businesses that are a significant and irreplaceable part of the Town's economic base. Both Alternatives 133mod and 133/18-25mod will cause removal of about twice as many homes as Alternative 133B, will disrupt several existing residential neighborhoods and create a new significant noise source for the neighborhoods directly below the corridor and those poised above it. These two alternatives would have the highway crossing the Hop River and then recrossing to its original side making no economic or ecological sense at all.

Finally, the steep-sloped terrain for these corridors in Columbia would dictate very difficult and costly construction, which by itself

has severe ecological implications, which have not been thoroughly detailed.

The current DOT cost estimates for these alternatives may be severely understated until the difficult working conditions have been properly factored in as part of a more detailed cost analysis.

In conclusion, the Columbia Planning and Zoning Commission formally urges Corps approval of Alternative 133B, because it minimizes the environmental impact, would be less difficult to construct and would be far less intrusive than 133mod and 133/18-25mod and their attendant devastating social and economic impacts.

On a personal note, I would like to add the safety improvements to the current Route 6 are certainly desirable, but they will also impede the east-west flow of traffic between the Hartford area and towns in Eastern Connecticut and beyond. Forty mile an hour speed limits will enhance safety, but further frustrate a high volume of drivers, who have no modern alternative to a road filled with intersections and driveways. A through drive way is indeed required, and 133B is a good overall

solution.

Thank you.

MODERATOR ROSENBERG: Thank you, sir.

The next speaker is Lori Mathieu, Chairman of the IWA. Speaking for her will be Darby Pollansky, the Vice Chair. And she will be followed by Leigh Ann Hutchinson from the Andover Board of Selectmen.

DARBY POLLANSKY: Hi. Darby Pollansky, Vice Chair, Coventry.

The comments expressed in this letter reflect the recommendations and concerns of the Coventry Wetlands Agency concerning the proposed Route 6 realignments. The CIWA strongly believes that impacts to wetland areas, watercourses and wildlife habitat is too great for an expressway with no clear proven need. The Coventry Inland Wetlands Agency is strongly in opposition to each one of the proposed expressways and specifically expressway Alternative 133B due to the lack of proven need and the overwhelming impact to wetland areas, watercourse water quality and wildlife habitat.

The Coventry Inland Wetlands Agency strongly believes and has found the following:

Impacts to wetland areas function and quality, watercourse water quality, wildlife patent – excuse me – patterns and habitats are at unacceptable levels for each one of the proposed alternatives. Specifically, for each one of the proposed alternatives, an average of 36 wetland acres and over 350 undeveloped wildlife habitat acres will be adversely impacted. The length of streambed crossed for Alternative 133B is over one mile (5,543 feet). These levels of impact are unacceptable for an expressway of approximately 13 miles.

Water quality of streams and wetlands will be greatly reduced region-wide due to construction impacts and long-term stormwater releases from an expressway. Discharge of road salt and sand, nitrates, heavy metals, and herbicides will forever adversely impact water quality of the more than one mile of crossed streambed. Downstream long-term impacts to the Willimantic River and its productivity have not been measured and are a concern.

During construction, a ten-year period of disruption to wildlife patterns and habitat will

occur. This will forever modify the wildlife habitat of this region. This cannot be replaced with mitigation. The mitigation techniques proposed are not proven, and the examples provided are not included in the design.

Specific wetland, watercourse and wildlife impacts will be greater than presented due to the ten-year construction timeframe. This length of construction period impact has been largely ignored by the applicant.

The previously proposed upgrades are viable alternatives and were shown to have significantly reduced impact to undisturbed wetland areas, watercourses and wildlife habitat.

The Coventry Inland Wetlands Agency, in its investigation of the data concerning the need for an expressway, has found that the need has changed since the original intent, recent upgrades to the existing Route 6 provides new data, and population projections show minimal growth. Based on this, the Coventry Inland Wetlands Agency finds that:

The US Army Corps cannot make an educated and informed decision due to the lack of

up-to-date data. Out-of-date safety and population projection data is used to prove the purpose and need for each one of the proposed expressway alternatives.

Up-to-date safety and population data must be provided by the applicant. Recent safety upgrades to the existing Route 6 and the Office of Policy and Management's long-range Population projections for water supply and transportation planning purposes, Series 95.2, dated July 1996, will show that there is no need for an expressway. This new data will show that the existing Route 6 can be rebuilt, improve safety, and carry projected traffic loads.

The original intent for US Route 6 in Eastern Connecticut was to connect Hartford, Connecticut to Providence. This has been lost. An expressway, if built, will carry people faster to the town of Windham. The Town of Windham, which Willimantic is part of, is projected to gain an average of 99 people per year for the next 40 years. The population is projected to gain less than 4,000 people in the next 40 years. There are no other large municipalities in the region. Regional growth

is projected to be minimal based upon OPM population projections.

The US Army Corps must make a fully informed formal decision. A final result must be in writing to all involved communities.

In summary, the CIWA believes the following is true:

Impact to wetland, watercourses, and wildlife habitat are at unacceptable levels for all three alternatives.

The applicant must continue to improve safety on the existing Route 6.

The CIWA requests that the US Army Corps formally reject each one of the proposed alternatives based upon the above.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

That was written Lori Mathieu who cannot be here.

Thank you.

MODERATOR ROSENBERG: Thank you.

The next speaker, Leigh Ann Hutchinson, Town of Andover.

Has she returned yet?

No. Okay. We'll keep calling her.

Our next speaker is Adel Urban, Town of Columbia, First Selectman.

(No response.)

MODERATOR ROSENBERG: Dana Young, Connecticut Fund for the Environment.

DANA YOUNG: Good afternoon. My name is Dana Young. I am an attorney for the Connecticut Fund for the Environment.

Connecticut Fund for the Environment will be submitting written comments, which we expect will be endorsed by several other groups, including Citizens for A Sensible 6, Connecticut Audubon, the Conservation Law Foundation, the Connecticut Chapter of the Sierra Club, Environmental Defense, River Zones and the Triad State Transportation Campaign.

My comments will cover four main topics: No. 1, the character of the environment; No. 2, the severe environmental impacts of the preferred alternatives; No. 3, upgrading Route 6 as a practicable alternative; and No. 4, other alternatives.

We believe that issuance of a 404 permit for ConnDOT's preferred Route 133B in Eastern

Connecticut, which is just slightly different from the recently rejected proposal must once again be rejected in light of the enormous direct and indirect environmental impacts.

Additionally, issuance of a 404 permit would be improper, because of the ready availability of at least one practicable alternative less destructive to the environment than the preferred alternative at variance by ConnDOT.

Serious safety concerns associated with the existing Route 6 certainly warrant responsible action. Still, irreplaceable environmental resources must not be unnecessarily sacrificed. It is difficult to understand why ConnDOT has once again proposed a project, which cannot qualify for a permit, and it is included as the only two alternative routes which would be at least as environmentally damaging, even though less destructive narrow passing practicable alternatives exist.

Although ConnDOT believes, and this is a quote, the ecological resources north of the Hop River in the eastern study area are not uncommon or particularly unique in southern New England, this

conclusion is contradicted by their record. ConnDOT has overlooked the 22 bird species, four mammal species and three reptile species listed by this state as a special concern, threatened or endangered that occur in the Route 6 study area.

Indeed, the landscape through which ConnDOT's preferred route would be constructed is among the least disturbed, least fragmented and most valuable wildlife habitat in Eastern Connecticut.

Let's see. We would like to reiterate, as others have done, that this is the same route they are proposing. I would like to discuss - I would like to mention the fact that they have not adequately considered the indirect impacts. I would like to mention the fact that undisturbed forest blocks, that the fragmentation of these is cause for serious alarm. And also, we have serious issues with the design modification, such as the widened median, the animal underpasses and one animal overpass. Many of these things are unproven, and the idea of a wildlife refuge between two sides of a freeway could probably even be more detrimental, because as certain experts have indicated, that could introduce habitat which would actually serve

as a vector for animals that could be destructive to the less sensitive species.

I have a lot more to say. Three minutes is too short.

MODERATOR ROSENBERG: Thank you. Once again, if you need to summarize lengthy statements for this at this venue, please feel free. We will accept written statements here where you can make more lengthy statements with the stenographer in the back.

My apologies to Mr. John Lescoe. I skipped this part earlier. So I would like to call him right now.

Mr. Lescoe, First Selectman, Town of Windham.

JOHN LESCOE: Thank you.

Good afternoon, members of the Army Corps of Engineers, Senators, State Representatives, Commissioners, ladies and gentlemen.

My name is John Lescoe, and I am the First Selectman in the Town of Windham. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Army Corps of Engineers for giving the residents in Eastern Connecticut a chance to express their views

concerning the building of the Route 6 expressway.
Sorry.

As the First Selectman and an elected official from the Town of Windham for the past 30 years, I been involved in this project since 1970 when the First Selectman Eugene Larsviere of Windham fought endlessly trying to make this highway a reality.

Also, I have a news article. This is from Saturday, March 23rd, 1963, when residents from Windham, including my mother, and the surrounding towns walked with oxen and carts to Hartford to demand that a highway be built. The legislature later approved \$15 million for a highway to be built, 5 million to be allocated for the Willimantic bypass to run from Columbia Katzmans Corner to the junction of Route 6 and 66 to North Windham above the Willimantic Airport and \$10 million for land acquisition and engineering for the Manchester bypass to the junction of Route 6 and 44A at Bolton Notch, a six-mile stretch. The most important section of road from Bolton through Columbia was not addressed at this time. It's still a mystery.

Here we are 37 years later, and we have

made no progress in building a new highway.

As First Selectman of the Town of Windham, that includes 23,000 people, I would like to go on record in support of Alternative 133B. I know we are not in the corridor, but we do have the highest population of Eastern Connecticut, 23,000 people that use that road on a daily basis.

A new Route 6 expressway will provide safety for many thousands of commuters, who use the road, and will provide a chance to enhance economic development that we so badly need in Eastern Connecticut.

We need a new highway. Eastern Connecticut is growing. Industry is on the move, and the economic climate of our region is changing rapidly. We need at least one safe highway for our citizens in the eastern corner of the state. I feel the time has come that we should set our priorities and start valuing human lives over wetlands.

I served 12 years in the Connecticut legislature. There were two meetings that I had. One meeting that I had for victims of families that was attended by well over three to 400 people. I presented the Department of Transportation also with

a petition signed by over 8,000 people from Willimantic and the Windham area.

Also, in 1996, when I left the legislature, out of 151 legislators, 95 percent of those legislators signed a petition in support of a new expressway for Eastern Connecticut.

In closing, please consider the new design or else please continue to work with the Department of Transportation for a safe solution.

Thank you.

MODERATOR ROSENBERG: Thank you, sir.

Our next speaker will be Mr. Michael Riley, representing the Motor Transportation Association of Connecticut, and he will be followed by Mr. Walter Drew, who lives in Columbia.

MICHAEL RILEY: Thank you very much. I am Michael Riley. I am president of the Motor Transport Association of Connecticut, which is a statewide trade association that represents 1,200 companies which operate commercial vehicles in and through the State of Connecticut.

I speak on behalf of those 1,200 companies and the thousands of other companies that are called upon daily to deliver products into

Eastern Connecticut and to indicate their support for Alternative 133B as the least environmentally damaging practicable alternative.

The fact of the matter is, Colonel, that we would support almost anything which connects Bolton Notch to Windham. Thirty years is too long to wait to complete this necessary link in the state's highway system. The gap on Route 6 from Bolton Notch to Windham is like a severed artery in the region's circulatory system and has stifled the economic development of the Willimantic area. Jobs which should have been created weren't. Opportunities have been missed, and too many lives have been lost. It is a disgrace and an embarrassment that this stretch of road has been identified for several years now as one of the most dangerous in the country. The loss of human life is the ultimate environmental damage.

Thirty years is long enough. No more hearings. No more signs. No more lawyers, bureaucrats or obstructionists. A greater good will be achieved by ending this laborious process and building the missing link in this important roadway.

Thank you.

MODERATOR ROSENBERG: Thank you, sir.

The next speaker is Walter Drew from Columbia, and he will be followed by Linda S-C-U-S-S-E-L.

LINDA SCUSSEL: Scussel, yes.

MODERATOR ROSENBERG: Thank you, sir. Please.

WALTER DREW: Mr. Rosenberg, Colonel Osterndorf and Ms. Lee.

My name is Walter Drew. I live at 388 Route 87, Columbia, Connecticut, and what I have — what I have in mind is Route 6 runs to the north in Andover and about halfway through there Bunker Hill Road goes off to the north and crosses Hop River. Now, it would be possible — and then curves to the right and runs easterly. It would be possible — I'm going to assume as something is built, from this curve in the road to build a ramp northerly to 133B. These ramps would be the same length as the ramps going to the end of the Willimantic bypass between 66 and 6. These ramps, they would not disturb any housing at all. Now, it would have no adverse affect if they were built on the conservation — it would have no adverse affect

on the economy of the area of being virgin country. We have no adverse affect on these sites that people would see.

Regarding general environmental concern, if you turn over one shovelful of dirt, you have changed the environment, but that doesn't necessarily mean it's bad. It might be good.

I feel that the work done here would not have overall any adverse general environmental concern affect. It would go - my proposal would not go through any wetlands or near enough to any wetlands for water runoff. It would not have any affect, even especially adverse on a wetland. The cultural value wouldn't in terms of fish and wildlife values I was talking to a service forester, and he said you have no adverse affect on wildlife in the area. And he knows his business. This would not have any affect on flood hazards and floodplain, because we are not that close to a floodplain. It is above it.

The land use would be limited access. It would not affect the use of the land at all. Navigation, no, no boats. Shoreline erosion, no. Depreciation, no. Recreation, no. Water supply and

conservation, I don't see how this is going to affect water supply at all, even though it will be entirely north of the Hop River, outside of the floodplain.

Runoff, I don't see how it would affect the water quality of, the energy needs, safety. I'll come back to that. Food production, no. There is woods there. In general, the needs and welfare of the people.

This is good. Route 316 comes up from Andover to Route 87 comes up from Columbia. This is halfway between. People who want to go Bolton Notch, get on the expressway and will be safer. This would be clearly in the best interests of the people. I didn't know I took so long.

MODERATOR ROSENBERG: Thank you, sir.
Thank you very much.

Linda Scussel, followed by Don Scussel.

LINDA SCUSSEL: I would like to continue with the Town of Coventry's testimony.

We are also aware that other alignments drawn in January of 1995, with less wetlands impacts were summarily removed, because the towns of Andover, Bolton and Columbia did not like them.

That is our Exhibit 10.

Can the best alignment be selected if some alternatives were thrown out too early in the process? Based upon the fact that DOT seemed to be pursuing the same old alignments with a religious zeal, we felt it imperative to hire professionals to undertake a peer review of DOT's application.

Twenty-four homeowners will be removed from their homes, 50 homes from the Town of Coventry, in addition to the 26 already taken. And the taxpayers of Coventry will be asked to subsidize this highway through an increase in taxes of at least 1.2 percent or .33 million. This will equal approximately \$1.7 million of lost revenue over a ten-year period due to the Route 6 highway, our Exhibit 11.

After a competitive process, the Town Council selected two advisers, Dr. Robert Thorson, a noted geophysics professor and researcher; and George Logan, a certified professional wetlands scientist, a registered soil scientist and a certified wildlife biologist. We have enclosed their resumes to demonstrate their credentials and experience. That is 12.

It should be pointed out that neither

adviser has a prior relationship with either the Town or the Route 6 process. Both started with a fresh perspective.

Both also were surprised at the documentation they reviewed. Doctor Thorson, Exhibit 13, found that the application is based toward DOT's preferred alignment. Scoring methodology favored riveting wetlands over slow wetlands. The evaluation methodology used is in conflict with the recommendation of the National Research Council for federal projects. Impacts of fractured hydrology were missing. Often statements were made in the application without a basis in fact. Important sites to avoid were narrowed to eliminate the Skungamaug River on the list. The Skungamaug is a major water source from the Hop River. It is as least valuable as the Hop River, but bridging this doesn't seem to concern people as much as a bridge over the Hop River. Why is this basis accepted? Why is DOT not required to evaluate wetlands by today's standards? Why were they allowed to introduce bias in an objective process? Bad data and methodology produce bad results.

George Logan and his associates, were

called upon to review in further depth the wetlands and wildlife evaluation.

Thank you.

MODERATOR ROSENBERG: Thank you, ma'am.

Don Scussel, followed by Jack Schneider from Columbia.

DON SCUSSEL: My name is Don Scussel, and I am an 18-year-resident of the Town of Coventry, and I'm a member of the Coventry Board of Education, but I'm here to speak for myself and hopefully for the rest of the citizens of the Town.

Basically, my first point is that I sincerely hope that the Corps of Engineers will not prostitute itself for political reasons. Both the Army Corps of Engineers and the federal Environmental Protection Agency have in the past clearly stated that they are against any expressway running north of the Hop River for environmental reasons.

I would submit that the environment is still the same; and if, in fact, environmental reasons exist to oppose any expressway north of the Hop River previously, if the environment is the same, the reasons ought to still be there.

And I would like to make a personal anecdote here. We just are in the process hopefully of concluding a very serious Presidential election. I have two children. They are both in their 30s, and they are both married. Both of my children – frankly, this is against my wishes, but both of my children and their spouses chose to vote for Presidential candidates because of their positions on the environment. And I submit to you that this underlines the extreme seriousness of the environment to the young people of our town and our state and our country. And I hope that you will not change your position on that.

Finally, I would state that Coventry already has suffered tremendous damage by your previously rejected – the previously rejected proposals and any impact on the Town of Coventry should include the damage that was already done, the number of homes that have already been taken in Coventry, which has been previously mentioned. It is not fair just to take the impact on the Town of the new bypass proposal. Also, it should be added in the previous damage that has been done to the Town.

Thank you very much for your consideration.

MODERATOR ROSENBERG: Thank you, sir.

Our next speaker, Jack Schneider from Columbia followed by Roger Adams from Mansfield.

JACK SCHNEIDER: That is Jack Schneider. It doesn't matter how you pronounce it, but I am Pastor of the Baptist Fellowship.

And it's interesting that none of the people who have spoken today have personally been a part of that highway. Well, for 29 years, my church and my office has been near the east end of that highway. It's still there today, and when people say there is less cars coming down, I will invite anyone to come and sit in my office any time between three and seven o'clock in the evening, and you tell me there is less cars coming. That just is not so.

And I have been called at five o'clock in the morning to go and tell three little children, seven and eleven and thirteen that their father was just killed after driving out of the driveway there. Two others were killed in the same accident. I have listened and heard the clash of metal outside of my office at the highway to run outside to see a lady

laying over, slumping over in the car. I have seen Light star come down into our church lot in order to help some people. Many times I have headed up the route, Route 6, toward Bolton, had to take a side exit, had to be taken here and there.

It wasn't without reason that that highway has been called "Suicide Six," and I speak for Alternative 133B, which I believe is the only sane way to go now, because we need the expressway. That highway, those people would have never died had they been able to see, just a few feet ahead, that this car was coming down. Sure, it was coming much faster than it should have. But had they been able to see the car, they wouldn't have pulled out. But three of them are dead, because they pulled out, and my hope is that as you consider these things one of your top priorities, if not the top, I would say the top, but should you people and the concern that we have for them, let's not take any of the southern routes. Nobody wants them. The people who don't want the other highway, the one I'm speaking for don't want the southern routes, and so think about those things as you examine this issue.

Thank you.

MODERATOR ROSENBERG: Thank you, sir.

Roger Adams will speak next followed by Phil G-E-N-D-R-O-N, I believe. It's hard to make that out, sir.

ROGER ADAMS: Thank you. My name is Roger Adams. I am a resident of Mansfield, residing at 278 Wormwood Hill Road, and I am Executive Director of the Chamber of Commerce, Incorporated in Willimantic which serves Windham, Mansfield and nine other surrounding towns. I appreciate the opportunity to appear here.

The Chamber is an organization of over 400 businesses, professionals and institutions in the Windham region. We have been on record for well over 30 years in support of an interstate grade highway in Eastern Connecticut to assist us in obtaining our region's significant economic development potential and promise. We support a fair and objective analysis leading to the construction of an expressway grade highway rather than an endless upgrade of the existing roadway.

Our position is based upon safety, environmental impact and economic development considerations. We do believe that it is time to

make a decision and get the project started.

Travelers are now using Route 6, which is a two-lane unlimited access roadway, below standards for safety and the mix of volume and traffic utilizing it on a daily basis. Ongoing improvements of fixing some of the problems associated with the old highway while leaving the dangerous mix of traffic unchanged and opening other sections of the road in such a way to encourage higher speeds.

Several lost lives and many serious injuries have occurred in Route 6 accidents in recent years. These losses can be blamed on a combination of human error, road design, overuse and the fact that a volatile mix of local service vehicles, neighborhood commuter and long-distance commercial traffic uses the existing road throughout the daylight hours. At night the road is traveled at relatively unsafe speeds by both long-haul truckers and local residents. I hate to see any school bus traffic on the highway at any time of the day for any purpose.

We are well aware that the Windham area has been unable to attract a number of employers due to our lack of an interstate-grade connection. The

region enjoys the benefit of railroad freight connections, airport, tourist attractions and two outstanding public universities; however, we are still without a modern highway connection more than three decades after the planning process was initiated.

It's our belief that an expressway grade highway will affect the environment less than an upgrade by encouraging growth in zoning with adequate protections for both the physical environment and neighborhoods and village centers involved. We support the continuing effort to secure a completed Eastern Connecticut expressway to limit the damage to village centers in the corridor, to improve safety, and to allow our major employers and our public institutions to encourage and to accommodate additional growth.

Thank you.

MODERATOR ROSENBERG: Thank you, sir.

Our next speaker is Phil Gendron, and he will be followed by Leigh Ann Hutchinson.

PHIL GENDRON: My son George was killed on that highway on October 8th, 1998.

And I have five points. This is what

some of the 20 to 25 year olds asked me the day he was killed. What is their number? 40? 60? 80? 100? How long do they worry about the ducks and birds before they build the road?

(2) Readers Digest had an article in 1995 saying this was one of the most unsafe two-lane roads in the United States.

(3) four hundred people work in my area, starting with East Hartford. Three of those 400 were killed on that road in separate accidents over 20 years.

(4) Practical thinking. Materials need to be moved; two, roads need to be safe; three, people are more important than animals.

I drove the road for 30 years. It's too much traffic from approximately 6:00 to 9:30 in the morning and also about 3:30 to 7:30 at night.

Thank you for your time.

MODERATOR ROSENBERG: Thank you, sir.

Leigh Ann Hutchinson. Leigh Ann Hutchinson is from the Andover Board of Selectmen. She will be followed by Adel Urban from Columbia.

LEIGH ANN HUTCHINSON: Good afternoon. My name is Leigh Ann Hutchinson. I am a member of

the Andover Board of Selectmen.

The Board of Selectmen and the Planning and Zoning Commission have consistently supported the route that has evolved into Alternate 133B presented and under consideration today.

ALternative 133mod and 133/18-25 would be geographically, socially and economically destructive for Andover. We are proud of the Town of Andover and wish to preserve its rural nature. We respect the environmental concerns and the Hop River associated with the construction of any expressway. However, we believe that the improvements and wetland crossings as presented for Alternative 133B represent a successful attempt to help address these concerns. We also believe that Route 6 was not built or intended to handle the volume of traffic it currently carries. The mixed content of the traffic includes inappropriate and a very detrimental mix of tractor trailer trucks, commercial vehicles, school buses and cars. Andover residents are very heavily impacted because Route 6 is, as our Selectman David Rhineland stated, our Main Street. We see and have to react to the traffic conditions and constantly witness people

passing in no passing zones on very dangerous curves with very poor site lines.

On behalf of the residents of Andover, we ask you to select 133B as the most appropriate and least environmentally damaging practicable alternative keeping in mind that people are the most important components of the environment.

Thank you.

MODERATOR ROSENBERG: Thank you, ma'am.

Our next speaker, Adel Urban, First Selectman, Town of Columbia.

ADEL URBAN: Good afternoon.

Once again, we are before you to express our opinion on an application for construction of a Route 6 expressway. The Board of Selectmen unanimously agrees that 133B, as submitted by the State of Connecticut Department of Transportation, should be approved by the federal agency.

With more than \$25 million spent on studies over the years and hours and hours of discussions, it always comes back to the construction of a highway north of the Hop River. I must believe that the state agencies have a better pulse beat on our area than the federal agencies

stationed afar. The state has a stake in this highway, as do the people who reside and travel in this area. The Department of Environmental Protection has long held the position of the sensitivity of the Hop River and has had its sights set on a highway north of the river.

We need to stop this insanity of options. For more than 35 years, the people of this area have been held hostage over this matter. It must end. No one wants their home taken or disrupted, so there will always be people who object to a highway which will affect their homes or properties. If everyone and every town in the state objected to a highway in their town, we would have no highways. A highway must go through somebody's town. To pretend that there are other reasons why people protest is probably secondary.

We have just had seven houses and one business taken by the state to fix Route 6, and no one batted an eyelash. Those proponents of Fix Six never said a word when someone else's home was taken to make shoulders for Route 6. There were three homes in Columbia taken, and they are off the tax rolls of this town forever, and those people

relocated somewhere else.

We are talking about takings numbering 57, if you should decide to take the southern route for a new Route 6, ripping the guts out of the town including some businesses. Furthermore, no one has come out in favor of the southern route in the state departments, only the Army Corps. What is that about?

In reading about impacts, it would seem to me that the northern route would minimize the environmental impacts. If you look at where we started and how the state agencies have addressed concerns, 133B should meet your criteria. Every effort has been made to address concerns only to have new concerns raised each and every time. If we don't get you one way we'll get you another seems to be the human cry of the federal agencies. Why is that? Could it be that you are fearful of environmental groups suing the government? Could it be that you are fearful of residents of the town? Or could it be that, as I heard from some federal agencies, they really don't want to finish this highway. You do know that whatever town you pick, the people are going to protest. That is a given.

You must make a decision one way or another, and this must end the frustration, confusion, and delusion so that people can get on with their lives.

I have more, but I know I am at the end. I will submit this to you, Ms. Lee, in writing.

MODERATOR ROSENBERG: Thank you, ma'am.

ADEL URBAN: Thank you.

MODERATOR ROSENBERG: The stenographer needs to change tapes. May I propose a 15-minute break.

Ladies and gentlemen, we will reconvene at 3:55. That is five of three.

Thank you.

MODERATOR ROSENBERG: Our first speaker when we reconvene will be Doug Hopkins from Woodstock, Connecticut.

(There was a short break taken.)

MODERATOR ROSENBERG: Ladies and gentlemen, the hearing is now reconvened.

Before our first testimony, I would like to welcome Congressman-Elect Simmons, who has come to hear some of the testimony and to receive some information on the alternatives and talk to people in the crowd.

Thank you, sir, for coming today.

Our first speaker is Doug Hopkins, who is from the Environmental Defense, and he will be followed by Peter Maddocks.

DOUG HOPKINS: Thank you very much.

My name is Doug Hopkins. I am a resident of Woodstock, Connecticut, and also a staff member for Environmental Defense, a public interest environmental advocacy organization. And I am here to speak in opposition to the issuance of a 404 permit for 133B, or for either of the other alternatives.

As Dana Young said earlier today, Environmental Defense is a cosigner of a – of written testimony that is going to be submitted by the Connecticut Fund for the Environment and a number of other organizations.

Neither of these alternatives represent the least environmentally damaging practicable alternative. The way to find the least environmentally damaging practicable alternative is to redefine the problem that Connecticut Department of Transportation is trying to solve. The not-so-secret truth about the Route 6 expressway

debate is that it is much more about land use than about safety. If safety were the objective, improved safety could be accomplished with much less significant environmental damage by upgrading Route 6 modestly and enforcing the traffic laws. A new Route 6 expressway was slashed through the heart of some of the least fragmented, best functioning wetland and forest land habitat in Eastern Connecticut.

And what would a new Route 6 expressway bring? It would bring accelerated suburbanization and fragmentation of this extraordinary part of Southern New England. And not just to the towns directly affected by the expressway, but to many other towns contiguous to or near these towns.

Many critical decisions lie before us here in Northeastern Connecticut to be made over the next decade, and hanging in the balance is whether the Northeastern part of the state will succumb like a victim to the forces of suburbanization or whether we will instead craft a more sustainable future that respects our environmental, cultural and historical heritage.

So who is to make these decisions? We

are. We all are together. Deciding how land should be used in Northeastern Connecticut is not the Connecticut Department of Transportation's decision. It's ours, the communities and citizens of the towns of Northeastern Connecticut.

So in conclusion, I urge the Army Corps of Engineers to deny a 404 permit for all of these three alternatives.

Thank you very much.

MODERATOR ROSENBERG: Thank you, sir.

The next speaker Peter Maddocks from Ashford, Connecticut.

Mr. Edward Derench, D-E-R-E-N-C-H, Jr. from Coventry, Connecticut.

EDWARD DERENCH: Good afternoon. I live at 554 Pucker Street, Coventry, and I have a farm there; and if they go through that, the modified one that they want, it will take three quarters of my farm away; and furthermore, it will take the water away from my livestock. And as you all know, they are not making any more farmland. And I would appreciate it if you would deny it.

Thank you.

MODERATOR ROSENBERG: Thank you, sir.

Mr. John Twerdy, T-W-E-R-D-Y, Coventry.

JOHN TWERDY: That is me, and I'm going to relinquish my time -

MODERATOR ROSENBERG: Thank you, sir.

JOHN TWERDY: - to John Elsesser, our Town Manager. And excuse me. It's Twerdy, not Twerdy, but I have heard it before, so it's no problem.

MODERATOR ROSENBERG: Thank you.

JOHN ELSESSER: We will try to finish up our Town of Coventry's testimony.

It is difficult for us probably to respond on other significant issues that came within the Draft Environmental Impact Statement, such as noise and air quality since the data is over five years old and does not reflect current alignments. It should not only be noted that the steep grades of 133B may actually increase air pollution due to trucks downshifting.

The application also mentioned the possibility of climbing lanes, what the impacts are of this additional highway width. We request that if this process moves forward that additional information to update the impact statements be

forwarded to the towns to allow a response.

In closing, the Town of Coventry has always taken a scientific and process approach towards the Route 6 issues. We abide by the process without seeking end-run solutions. Today we are presenting the findings of our review. Others seem to want a highway as long as it's build elsewhere, remain silent on the scientific impacts. The NIMBY syndrome does not play a role in the 404 process. We believe the science at hand demonstrates that 133B is not permissible. This will become even clearer if the shading of the DOT's bias were removed. We believe it is the responsibility of the Army Corps to reject this application, deny a permit for 133B. The social and environmental impacts are far too great to proceed with the 30-year-old concept that will not serve the region's transportation needs.

The application has failed to comply with federal requirements and is incomplete, flawed and biased. Many quests are undertaken for noble purposes, with the test of time are recognized to be pointless. It is time for the DOT to give up on pursuing northerly alignments. 133B is not and

cannot be modified to be the least environmentally damaging practicable alternative.

Thank you for listening to our testimony. We urge you to review in detail our submissions. Our 11,000 citizens equal to populations of Bolton, Andover and Columbia.

Thank you.

MODERATOR ROSENBERG: Thank you, sir.

Mr. Twerdy.

JOHN TWERDY: Yeah.

MODERATOR ROSENBERG: The main purpose we are here tonight is to listen to your comments and to understand your concerns.

Sir, if you would like to speak, please.

JOHN TWERDY: Yes, I would. Thank you very much.

My name is John Twerdy. I reside at Pucker Street, Coventry, Connecticut, 605.

This particular project is going to adverse - affect me adversely even more than the original one did. They came through back a few years ago and took seven and a half acres of land. They landlocked six and a half acres of our family farm, which we have been there since 19 - 1920. I

ended up taking the state to court. I had to go out and hire a lawyer. I had to go out and hire an appraiser. We ended up meeting, and we doubled the price what they had offered us. Unbeknownst to me at the time, there wasn't any property or anything that I could reinvest in. I ended up paying the federal government \$38,000 capital gains on the money I had gotten from the State of Connecticut.

Well, now they have come back, and they have widened this proposal, and they are going to be right in the backyard of my son's new home. I gave the — my wife and I just gave them a little corner lot of the original farm, and I didn't even notice how close they were coming until I came in here today. They are between 300 and 350 feet away from this new deck that we just put in this past — this past fall.

And, you know, you got these people, they talk about animals, and they talk about referring to animals and people. Well, I don't know, you know, the animals give us a lot of signals as to what is taking place around us. I mean a lot of times the people don't listen to these animals. You know they say, people, well, you know they talk

about this gentleman that the minister talked about three people getting killed on route – he didn't tell you the guy was so drunk he didn't even know who he was, the young fellow. Then he turned around a year later and got in another accident, or two years later he had another accident. So they have all these fuzzy things they have come up with. I mean, you know, I sympathize with people and their families and so forth. But how about sympathizing with somebody that their mother and father came to this country from Europe for a better life, put six of their sons through the service in this country, and then they come in and do what they did to me.

You have to excuse me. I'm just a little emotional, but I mean, you know, they don't want it in their backyard. They want it my backyard. But I'm not saying that I want it in their backyard, but if they want it so bad, why don't they take it. I mean, you know, common sense. There is three towns against one. They want it, but they don't want it in Andover. They don't want it in Bolton, and they don't want it in Columbia, but they have got all the reasons in the world to put it in my backyard.

Thank you very much for your time, and I apologize.

MODERATOR ROSENBERG: Thank you, sir.

Our next speaker, Cynthia E-R-H-O.

CYNTHIA ERHO: Thank you. Good afternoon.

And that's Cynthia Erho. I'm from Columbia. And I guess I have to start by saying it's really sad that something like this, first of all, makes enemies out of neighbors sometimes. I don't feel that way, but for the Reverend, I don't know if he is still here, who said he hadn't heard anyone personally associated with Route 6. Well, I have been for over 40 years. My family home is immediately off of Route 6. In my lifetime of over 50 years, I have traveled Route 6, and I am a driver on Route 6 all the time.

The reason that it's unsafe, or reasons, are primarily because the use has increased so much over the years. That says our population. And the other is the drivers, many of the drivers. I just want to cite one example. There is a woman who regularly drives on Route 6 in a little white car. I have had her behind me, where I never seen her

face because of the dog in her lap. I have had her pushing me, passing me, and the dog is still in her lap as she flies up, as I'm doing 48 and 50 miles and hour, and she goes zooming. I mean, that is just one case. And anybody that travels Route 6 would say thank you to State Police for being out there a little more. We need you there a lot more.

I would be vehemently opposed, as I know my neighbors are, as I know many people are to widening Route 6 and making that an expressway. That would be a killer highway for sure. It already is. Route 6 is a rural highway. It used to be a foliage trip. Family and friends from the western part of the state come over for a foliage trip. People are right. You can't have school buses and semis, but Route 6 is a two-lane rural highway, and we love the environment. We have got deer in our backyard and ducks in the swamp, and we have got salamanders, but please consider the human environment, too. There are families that are affected, and sadly somebody is going to be affected no matter what.

I am urging you, if we must have an expressway, to take another look at that northerly

route. I have had people on my street who have already moved, because of an impending project 10 or 15 years ago, and it's the same project we are talking about today. They don't want to have to move their family again either. So even though we are not supposed to get emotional, we can't help it, but consider the human environment as well.

133B, the northern route, makes the most sense.

Thank you.

MODERATOR ROSENBERG: Thank you.

Our next speaker, Edward Grace, will be followed by Hugh MacKenzie.

Mr. Grace.

No. Mr. MacKenzie. Mr. MacKenzie lives in Columbia.

HUGH MacKENZIE: Hello. My name is Hugh MacKenzie. I live at 45 Route 6, Columbia. I live right on the road. I am a member of Columbia's Planning and Zoning Commission, although I speak for myself today.

I completely support Alternative 133B as the best and only alternative for a Route 6 bypass. Alternative 133B impacts the least amount of wetland

acres and the least amount of core forest. The other two alternatives, Alternative 133 modified and 133-18/25 modified would destroy Columbia's very limited commercial and manufacturing zone. It would severely impact now viable commercial businesses vital to Columbia's economic base and take almost twice as many homes as Alternate 133B.

Alternate 133B also impacts the least amount of farmland. Beyond the commercial and human disasters, the two alternatives itself which the Hop River would create in Columbia, the amount of crossings of the Hop River, the danger an expressway poses to the 16 to 20 acres of aquifer that lies beneath these two alignments, and the fact that they affect more wetlands of greater wildlife value south of the Hop River an ecological disaster waiting to happen. Saving the swamp is fine, but saving water to sustain human life contained in the aquifer is even far more important.

Structural, logistic and engineering components of alignments south of the Hop River are particularly daunting, especially compared to the relative ease in which Alternate 133B could be built. Alternate 133B could be built as an

expressway, having to bring minimal footprint, working with the natural contours of the land in a manner that will create an almost park-like setting working in harmony with the land to meet this region's transportation needs and ultimately act to preserve the region's forests, wetlands and natural habitat. Ultimate south of the Hop River would be forced onto the – onto land forcing the combined spaces in environmental damaging ways whose negative impacts could never be mitigated.

The Connecticut Department of Transportation, the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection and the Connecticut's Office of Policy Management all support Alternate 133B. This is a section of highway we will complete within the confines of Connecticut. I ask you to please listen to the people on the ground, the experts here in Connecticut, when deciding this issue. I believe they and only they are the best informed to make the right decision for all aspects of Connecticut's needs. I hope that you will take the input and advice of Connecticut's official experts and rebuild all – and build Alternate 133B.

I had Life Star land on the road in

front of my house on my daughter's birthday, and the clown the next year didn't quite cut it. One morning when I was out waiting for her with the bus, a tractor trailer left a skid mark about 150 feet long when it had to slam the brakes on as it didn't see the bus on time as it came over the crest of the small hill just to the west of my house, and we stand about 100 – we stand about 50 feet back from the road until we see the bus just about to stop. So I don't want a tractor trailer to jackknife and take us both out all standing and waiting for the bus in the morning.

Thank you.

MODERATOR ROSENBERG: Thank you, sir.

Our next speaker, I believe, it's Molly B-E-M-E-M-E, 62 River Road, Coventry.

Peter Maddocks.

David Torstenson.

DAVID TORSTENSON: That's pronounced Torstenson. My name is Dave Torstenson. I live at 596 Pucker Street in Coventry. I would like to identify on that handout that we picked up today that on page 11 of 12 in the extreme upper left-hand corner is my home. I rise in strong opposition to

133B and actually in opposition to an expressway of any type.

I have been cautioned not to use the not-in-my-backyard argument, but doggone it, plan 133B goes directly right through my backyard, and it takes approximately 50 percent of my land, probably not enough for the state to condemn the house, but it certainly would destroy our property and our quality of life. We have horses. We have animals. The alignment runs, oh, maybe 15 feet from our stock pond that our horses water at.

The entire process that has been going on in the State of Connecticut on this expressway from Manchester to Willimantic over the past 35 years is nothing more than politically motivated, I feel. As of approximately 12 years ago, the DOT in one of the most bone-headed decisions that have been made in Connecticut's history had the audacity to buy up property from Bolton to Willimantic, put people out of their homes, take their property, and then be turned down by the Army Corps of Engineers on their permit application.

Well, they still own the properties on our street, on Pucker Street, there were six houses.

It took about eight years, but five of them have now deteriorated to such a point that have been destroyed. There is one still standing that has been vandalized.

The DOT after they were turned down from that plan floated numerous trial balloons. It was 54 that took out the Coventry High School. There was 18 and 25. They absolutely destroyed Andover and Columbia. There was 133, 133A, 133 modified, 133B, and doggone, aren't they right back to the property they owned already or following a very, very similar track.

It's - it's amazing. It seems to me that there is some bent on the part of the state to force this highway and to force it through Coventry. What has happened in the meanwhile is that Bolton, Columbia and Andover have aligned very strongly with the DOT to put the highway in and to put it through Coventry.

On our street, Pucker Street and Babcock Hill, we have approximately 40 brand-new homes. That residence is pushing all the animals down into this corridor that this highway will take.

I have got quite a bit more, but I will

save that for the evening.

Thank you.

MODERATOR ROSENBERG: Thank you. Thank you, sir.

Edward Grace.

NANCY BENEDICT: Excuse me. I think that was my bad handwriting that you read earlier.

MODERATOR ROSENBERG: Thank you.

NANCY BENEDICT: It's not Molly, but it's a good name. I am Nancy Benedict, and I live at 62 Hop River Road.

MODERATOR ROSENBERG: Could you spell your last name.

NANCY BENEDICT: B-E-N-E-D-I-C-T.

MODERATOR ROSENBERG: Thank you, ma'am.

NANCY BENEDICT: And I will submit something in writing, typewriting.

And for the record, I want to say I do live at 62 Hop River Road. I built a home in 1991 there. It was a couple years after the permit was denied, and I thought I was safe, but no, not so fast.

I am opposed to 133B. My objections are basically threefold. First, the state DOT has never

taken a serious look, and we have improved our current road. We have heard about fatal accidents since the accident rate is below state average, so let's fix those sidelines, intersections, curbs, shoulders or whatever. The state DOT is finally doing some of that. Why did it take 35 years and how many lives were lost. And why – in the meantime, we got the reputation of being Suicide Six.

And why can't we get information from the DOT about the projected results of these current improvements? The Town of Coventry has been asking for this information for over a year, I believe.

Coventry did explore ways to improve the current roadway and hired consultants a few years ago. There are some interesting options that are outlined, but need some more work. Why does Coventry have to pay for this? Just imagine what the state DOT could do with all its resources if they only had the political will to break out of an expressway mentality. I think that we may have to wait for campaign finance reform for the DOT to change more than just their name. They used to be known as the Department of Highways.

Second, 133B is not the least environmentally damaging practical alternative. This is well known as the reason all other alignments north of Hop River have been turned down. So why are we looking at this same proposal again? I think we all know the answer. 133B is the least politically damaging to the surrounding towns. And I want to say I'm proud of Coventry for its integrity. We did not vote no to an expressway in our yard and yes to an expressway in someone else's town.

And as for Windham, I understand the population is declining and you may want to think about what Senator Guglielmo suggested earlier, I think, or someone did, we may want to think about better transportation to the southeastern part of the state is just clearly where the money and future jobs are.

Third, the expressway is expected to cost more than \$310 million for 12 or 15 miles. That is about \$25 million per mile. It just doesn't make sense. The expressway is a not a good use for our valuable resources, not even a wealthy state where citizens have health care, or prescriptions or

even food. It's the last remnant of a dream of a highway in Rhode Island and I-95 and Cape Cod. I think it's time to let this dream rest in peace. I have a neighbor who told me she was first approached about this road over 40 years ago. Let us get on with our lives. Do not resuscitate. I urge you to deny the permit for Alternative 133B.

Thank you.

MODERATOR ROSENBERG: Thank you.

Mr. Peter Maddocks.

Mr. Edward Grace.

Ladies and gentlemen, during the break, 13 individuals withdrew their cards and said they would speak tonight so we have a little bit of extra time.

If you filled out a card, but did not indicate wanting to speak, please, would there be anybody here who would wish to speak.

Mr. Elsesser.

JOHN ELSESSER: Thank you. We actually skipped one little section that we did want to talk to, which was just raised.

We would surprisingly like to congratulate the Connecticut DOT for undertaking the

improvements to Route 6 and for the planned upcoming improvements. It is the Town's belief that these improvements will reduce the accident rate and more importantly the fatalities and severity rate to a level expected for this type of road and equal to other regional roads.

To test this assumption, starting last December, we requested DOT – from DOT the projected safety results from the recently completed and planned projects. We were stunned by DOT's response that they, quote, have no business purpose to maintain the single file and title safety analysis. We thought that safety on Route 6 was their concern and the justification for this project. Since they refused to provide any information on the projected safety gains, the Town of Coventry was forced to file an appeal with the Freedom of Information Commission. That is included as Exhibit 6.

The limited documentation they did share indicates a belief that the current projects will improve safety. For example, in the project entitled Route 6, Safety Improvements Columbia Project description set forth the purpose of the proposed project as, quote, this project has been

initiated as part of a larger effort to address safety along the entire Route 6 corridor, widening the shoulders with better patrols, ingress and egress in the residences and businesses in a safer controlled manner. The intersection improvements will provide exclusive left-hand turns as well as improved intersection site distances thereby reducing the number of rear-ended collisions. This hints that Connecticut DOT has a plan to address safety in the corridor as part of a larger effort. Why not release it? What are the expected quantitative safety results from their work? Their statements indicate an expectation of improvements. If they haven't estimated the outcome of these improvements, shouldn't they be required to do so, or does the work prove that the environmental and social damage of an expressway is not warranted? Why are they so evasive?

One year later, we still do not have this information. Our Freedom of Information appeal is still pending. We questioned the validity of the project's purpose and without this information. We urge you to demand that information.

MODERATOR ROSENBERG: Thank you, sir.

Yes, sir. Please speak – say your name, spell your last name and address for the stenographer.

RON DEXTRADEUR: My name is Ron Dextrateur, D-E-X-T-R-A-D-E-U-R, from Coventry.

Despite being informed that several other routes south of the Hop River would be permitted as well as an upgrade, the Connecticut DOT has once again submitted a proposal that contains the same problems. It has the audacity to argue that unproven modifications and mitigations justify what they have preferred all along, which is the old rejected Route 80 – Alternate 54. Where has the DOT compromised? Have they ever really considered a moderate and reasonable upgrade of the existing highway? No. Are they willing to accept any of the alternate routes running south of the Hop? No. Have they been open to any other suggestions? Not in my opinion. Twice now they have submitted a route that they fully know is not environmentally the best alternative and are now, again, pressuring the very agency created to prevent such abuse into caving in.

My wish is that all environmentally

concerned people see what is being attempted here. To allow the ConnDOT to determine what route is chosen will establish a precedent that will lead to the erosion of environmental regulations. I hope that the protection of wetlands and watersheds will not be sacrificed. It would be a shame to reward ConnDOT's behavior by giving in to what they want even if not economically or environmentally defensible. The same route wasn't acceptable in 1988 or 1987, it is even less so today.

A University of Connecticut study reported in today's Hartford Current, November 21st, found that the Hartford economic region has declined in population by 7.2 percent, yet the state still projects a need for this expressway. The economists are recommending that the state encourage a change from our current dominant economies of poor cities surrounded by rich suburbs. Their policies will attract people back into the cities, but instead our DOT is still trying to make commuting even more attractive from areas even further removed from Hartford. What makes this even worse is they are occurring at a time of rising oil prices and further urban decay caused by city residents trying to flee

from the educational and other failings of the city where only the poor are left to stay.

In conclusion, I urge you to resist the DOT's pressure and permit only environmental friendly and a reasonable upgrade of the current Route 6 until it is clearly evident that an expressway is, in fact, even needed.

Thank you.

MODERATOR ROSENBERG: Thank you, sir.

Is there anybody else who filled out a card and wishes to speak at this time?

Sir, once again, state your name, spell your last name and your address.

JAMES CLARK: James Clark, C-L-A-R-K.

On behalf of the citizens of Coventry, the Coventry Town Council is going on the record once again as opposing the new alternative, Alternative 133B, proposed by the Connecticut DOT as their preferred alternative to upgrading the present Route 6, or any of the alignments that would receive a permit.

The negative environmental impact on the sensitive Skungamaug River, Hop River and Bear Swamp watersheds will not be diminished by this new

proposal as noted in prior communiques and the volume of evidence that you will be reviewing in the upcoming weeks concerning Alternative 133B and Alternative 133A modified. This new proposal, Alternative 133B will take 26 more homes in Coventry, in addition to the 30 that were seized 20 years ago, have an extremely detrimental effect on the social and economic fabric of the Town. The social and economic impact of Alternative 133/18-25 modified would be incurred by the three towns of Bolton, Andover and Columbia combined.

Alternative 133B would have its greatest social economic impact on the Town of Coventry without any appreciable benefits.

According to Mr. Hurle, Director of Environmental Planning and Bureau of Policies and Planning for the State for Connecticut, the difference in impacts of Alternatives 133/18-25 modified and Alternative 133B modified to the natural environment are minimal. Therefore, all things being equal, communities that want the expressway built should bear the impact. Both Andover and Columbia have wanted this highway for over 30 years. As long as it was in Coventry, there

is historic written evidence to that fact. If the Army Corps of Engineers are going to permit an expressway then they should give the southernly Alternative 133/18-25 modified a great deal of consideration, not only for the environmental impacts that would not affect the Skungamaug River and Bear Swamp wetland complex in Coventry, but it will give the people in Bolton, Andover and Columbia the expressway they want in their towns.

The Town of Coventry has never wavered from its firm belief that an expressway is not needed to alleviated the traffic situations on Route 6. We believe the present upgrades of Route 6 aimed at increasing safety presence will cause motorists to reduce their speed and possible accidents. We ask that the US Army Corps of Engineers continue to reject proposals that are north of Route 6, as it has in the previous years.

Thank you.

MODERATOR ROSENBERG: Thank you.

Is there anybody who has filled out a card and wishes to speak?

Yes, ma'am.

Once again, please, state your name,

spell your last name for the stenographer and give us the address.

JOANNE IVES: Joanne Ives, I-V-E-S, Columbia, Connecticut.

In considering the viewpoints from people, people usually argue when they have something to gain. In all of the alternatives presented, I have something to lose, but I'm standing here today, because I believe that an expressway is needed, and I drive on Route 6 very often. There is a marker at my corner where the family of a deceased person put a marker, and there is many markers along Route 6 that are similar. I don't know the name of the person, but it happened within the time that I lived in the vicinity, and I think any of the family members, and that is one symbolic person, would be opposed to the question, would I give up my home, would I give up my business, if I could retrieve my family member? It would be a resounding yes.

And when I say that I have something to lose by all the alternatives, we usually talk about there is monetary things as well as the environmental. It would impact where I work as a

public servant, and budgets in towns are very pressing issues. It would impact property in both towns where I have property interests. But although people don't usually like to have that kind of cost, I — I remember the caution that someone gave me when I first moved to the area, Never turn your wheels left when you are making a left turn on Route 6 until you can actually cross the road, because when you're rear ended, it's usually the person is usually killed by being driven into the ongoing traffic. And when I ride on Route 6, I think of that, and I think of that all the time when I make a left turn. And I don't think that people should have to think that way when they are driving. This is something we can do something about. There are so many things we can't, and it comes at a cost to many people.

And so I just wanted to stand up here as someone who would be losing in one sense by all the alternatives, but I think it's for the greater good.

Thank you.

MODERATOR ROSENBERG: Thank you, ma'am.

Is there anybody else that would like to speak who has filled out a card?

Sir, it's approximately 3:35. Terrific.

Sir, once again when you come to the microphone, speak your name, spell your last name to the stenographer.

DAVID TORSTENSON: Is it possible to continue what I was saying?

Dave Torstenson, T-O-R-S-T-E-N-S-O-N,
596 Pucker Street in Coventry.

As I was saying when I ran out of time, what has happened in the intervening 11 years since the Army Corps declined the permit to the original plan for the expressway is that Bolton, Coventry and Andover have aligned themselves dearly with the DOT to the point where the DOT has given them pep talks. That was a headline in the paper a couple of weeks ago in the Journal Inquirer. There had been about 40 new homes on Pucker Street and Babcock Hill that do not show on the maps in the other room. These are new houses, subdivisions, that are forcing the wildlife out of that area and pushing them down into this area that the highway is being proposed.

While I was out in the other room, I overheard a conversation that - I don't have this first hand. It's an overheard, but it was by

members of the DOT admitting that there were habitats that were put on the maps of the original proposal, which mysteriously have disappeared off of the current maps. The excuse is that the one that did the investigation of those habitats decided that since they were not all prime habitats they may be misinterpreted as being prime so they were erased, and they don't exist any more.

I think before any decision is made by the Army Corps this should be investigated fully, because those - that elimination of those habitats does not show in the DOT's presentation to the Army Corps in this application.

The DOT has made significant progress in upgrading Route 6, but of concern is that there was a rumple strip that was put on six-tenths of a mile in the Bolton area at the very start of Route 6. That seemed to me - I travel Route 6 twice a day, and that was keeping the cars at least on their side of the road, and then one of the residents of Bolton took up a petition. There were five residences in that six-tenths of a mile, took up a petition, got some signatures, and the DOT went out and removed one of the most successful, I feel, safety

improvements that have been made to Route 6. It wasn't that it wasn't safe. It was disturbing the neighborhood. Again, there were five houses there. I'm sure that has saved some lives there.

It doesn't make sense to me to build this highway through Coventry. You have got 11 miles of superhighway, and it made sense to go around Manchester with a bypass. It made sense to go around the City of Willimantic with a bypass. It doesn't make sense to me to go around the community of Andover with a highway, especially to the detriment of my hometown and my family.

Thank you very much.

MODERATOR ROSENBERG: Thank you.

Is there anybody else who wishes to speak that hasn't?

LORI MATHIEU: I haven't signed up.

MODERATOR ROSENBERG: We can take care of that right after.

Would you please state your name, spell your last name and the town and the interest you represent for the stenographer.

LORI MATHIEU: My name is Lori Mathieu, L-O-R-I; Mathieu, M-A-T-H-I-E-U, and I'm here

representing myself as a citizen of Northeastern Connecticut, lifetime Northeastern Connecticut citizen, and most recently for the past nine years I have lived – resided in northern, the most northern portion of Coventry. I estimate that my house is about three miles north. It probably won't be impacted noisewise or travelwise. I travel to Hartford.

I just want to note a few interesting points. I am an environmentalist and also a planner. And I myself have driven Route 6 and have been quite scared. But my point is the existing intent, the old intent for Route 6 is nonexistent now. And I think in some of my testimony provided by Darby in my wetlands, I am the Chairman of the Coventry wetlands as well, we found some very interesting points, and officials from the town have also pointed this out.

Number one, look very closely at DOT's new and existing safety information and make sure you get it from them. I think that will show you with all the new improvements that they have done there is quite a difference from the early '90s and the '80s. Look at a request of DOT, their

population projections, the long-term population projections. Not just the ones that are presented in the state conservation and development policies plan, but the ones that are done for transportation and water supply planning for 2030 and 2040. They will show that Windham has basically a flat line population growth and Willimantic, as we all know, is a part of Windham. And there is no other looming metropolis around Willimantic. They have done wonderful safety improvements beyond Willimantic through Bolton – through Brooklyn and those are wonderful; however, even after that, I myself have lost a cousin.

But I think there are things that DOT can do. They can continue to improve the existing Route 6. It can be done. Ask DOT for the appropriate information on purpose and need. Look in their own policy plan. This is the state policy plan that the Office of Policy and Management produces. I don't think that they even want DOT. DOT writes the section on transportation. There is an entire section here. There is maybe 20 pages of information. If you look at policy D, Section 9, complete major transportation projects identified in

Connecticut Master Transportation Plan. And they go on. They said, public Act 911.1 requires that major transportation proposals be identified in this plan. So you would think an expressway for Route 6 would be in here. Well, it's not. Route 6 corridor improvements in Brooklyn. Route 6 corridor improvements from Bolton to Windham. Improvements. That doesn't mean building an expressway.

It's interesting. They don't say that. They used to say build an expressway in here. They didn't. They revised this. It's a recent up-to-date plan. They revise it every five years.

I don't think it's DOT's intent to build an expressway. I would urge the DOT and the state to continue their safety program and to increase it. Spend the money, the \$400 million on safety improvements now. Don't allow the most dangerous intersection in the state, in my opinion, it is worth 384 and 6 and 44 are split. That is very dangerous. For those people that have to turn onto that side road to go to Bolton, I can't imagine living up there. That is the most dangerous intersection probably in Eastern Connecticut. Something needs to be done. It needs to be done

there now. And like one of the ladies so wonderfully put from Coventry said, you know, we need to do this now. Why has it been 35 years? They have known about these safety issues. They have sat on this, because they want to build an expressway. They need to rebuild that road, and we think it can be done in an environmentally acceptable manner.

Also I would ask — I would also ask that try to keep — and I know you have to keep the politics out of this. You have to look at the environmental issues and look at the purpose and need and look very closely at DOT's numbers, and I think you'll see that they themselves don't want to build the expressway.

Thank you.

MODERATOR ROSENBERG: Thank you.

Yes, sir.

JOHN TWERDY: Just to reiterate.

MODERATOR ROSENBERG: Once again, when you get to the microphone, speak your name, spell your last name for the stenographer.

JOHN TWERDY: John Twerdy, T-W-E-R-D-Y, 605 Pucker Street.

Getting back to some of the information. I just notice this reading through your brochure, DOT's brochure, and right behind my son's house, and I have got some - he had to move his house 75 feet towards the road. We had planned on putting it back off the road 150 to 175 feet, but we couldn't do that, because of the wetlands behind his house. Now I'm looking at his house on the brochure on this map that DOT come up with, and there is no wetlands there. I wonder what happened. Did they run out of ink or - and we have got a lady from the Town of Coventry who is on the Inland Wetlands. And she can verify all the stuff. That we had to move our house. I had to put the septic tank - septic system in another area. We had all kinds of stuff that we couldn't do there because of the wetlands, but I look on their map, and they don't have any wetlands there, and it's clearly swampland.

So, you know, are they telling us the truth here? I mean who did all these surveys? I'm not a soil scientist, but I mean, I get skunk cabbage, and you get cattails, and they say that is a good sign of wetlands, but DOT - and I'll bring it to your attention, Colonel. You can have this.

And they say there is no wetlands there.

Thank you very much.

MODERATOR ROSENBERG: Thank you, sir.

Is there anybody else who wishes to speak that filled out a card?

Before I recess, has Mr. Edward Grace returned, or Mr. Peter Maddocks?

Sir, it's now approximately 3:45. May I recess this hearing until 7:00 when we can reconvene?

COLONEL OSTERNDORF: Sure.

MODERATOR ROSENBERG: This hearing is now in recess.

Thank you.

(Whereupon, at 3:46 p.m., the hearing was recessed.)

EVENING SESSION

MODERATOR ROSENBERG: Good evening.

VOICES: Good evening.

MODERATOR ROSENBERG: Good evening.

This session is now reconvened. Before we start, the Connecticut Commission on the Deaf and Hearing Impaired is here for assistance.

Is there anybody here that will need the assistance this evening?

No? Thank you.

Good evening, and welcome to this public hearing regarding the permit application for the Connecticut Department of Transportation for the proposed construction of the Route 6 expressway. My name is Larry Rosenberg, and I'm the Chief of Public Affairs for the United States Army Corps of Engineers in New England, and I will be your moderator and facilitator this evening.

Our Hearing Officer tonight is Colonel Brian Osterndorf, our District Engineer for the United States Army Corps of New England.

Should you need copies of the public notice, the hearing procedures or other pertinent

information, it is available at the registration table.

I should point out that the Corps of Engineers has made no decision regard regarding this permit application in question.

The agenda for the public hearing is following this introduction, Colonel Osterndorf will address the hearing. He will be followed by the permit applicant, the Connecticut Department of Transportation, who will discuss the permit application and their preferred alternative.

Before we begin, I would like to remind you of the importance of filling out those cards that were available at the door. Those cards serve two purposes.

First, they let us know that you are interested in this permit so we can keep you informed; second, they provide me a list of those who wish to speak tonight. If you did not complete a card, or wish to speak, or receive future information regarding this permit, one will be provided for you at the registration desk.

One additional comment. We are here to receive your comments, not to enter into any

discussion of those comments or to reach any conclusions any questions should be directed to the record and not to the individuals on the panel.

Thank you.

Ladies and gentlemen, Colonel Osterndorf.

COLONEL OSTERNDORF: Okay. I would like to go ahead for those of you that were in attendance earlier today when we had our first session to repeat my remarks, because they talk about what the authorities we have vested in us through the acts of Congress to make permit decisions here, and also to explain a little bit about the process that you are a part of tonight.

Again, as Larry has said, we are here to go ahead and engage the public hearing on the proposed construction of the Route 6 expressway between Bolton and Windham. I would like to thank you all for being here tonight on your time to engage in this process with us, because it's important.

As Larry said, if you bring up topics, whether it be in person, through your verbal communication to us, or in writing, they will be

part of the record, and then as such, will be considered as we make our decisions.

I would like to introduce some of the other folks that are here tonight from the Corps of Engineers. Sitting at the table with me is Susan Lee, who is the project manager for this project and has been associated with it for a good number of years. Out in the audience here to my left is Bob DeSista, who is our regional program manager for the regulatory program we have; and sitting next to him is Brian Valiton from the Office of Counsel from the Corps of Engineers.

This hearing is being conducted as part of a program to listen to your comments. I would like to, like I said, review some of the authorities for ability to make this decision.

First, the Corps' jurisdiction in this case is Section 404 of the Clean Water Act. That regulates the discharge of dredged or filled materials in water to the United States to include wetlands.

Secondly, the detailed regulations that explain the procedure for evaluating permit applications and unauthorized work is Title 33 of

the Code of Federal Regulations. Parts 320 through 330, which were published in the Federal Register February 13, 1986.

Third, the Corps' decision rests upon several important factors to include, in accordance with the federal Clean Water Act, the project must comply with the Section 404(b)1 guidelines, which are the federal environmental regulations concerning the filling of waters and wetlands. In accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act, if you hear the term NEPA, that is what that stands for. Any project that significantly affects the environment must have an Environmental Impact Statement. In this case, the Federal Highway Administration is the lead federal permitting the EIS.

Federal law requires that the Corps' may only permit the least environmentally damaging practicable alternative. This, again, gets to the part of the discussion of what the process is all about. And tonight, if you hear the term LEDPA, L-E-D-P-A, what that stands for is least environmentally damaging practical alternative. The Corps must evaluate alternatives to avoid or

minimize impacts on waters or wetlands.

There are basically two parts to the file selection process. First, an analysis is conducted of all the – all of the available alternatives to determine practicability, and practicability is partly interpreted as whether or not it suits the project purpose for which it is being proposed.

And then secondly, given the practicable alternatives that have been presented, the final alternative must be the one that is least damaging to the environment. In determining practicability, the Corps considers such factors as costs, safety, and community impacts. If these types of defects are severe, the Corps may rule out alternatives, even if they are less environmentally damaging. However, once all of the practicable alternatives are determined, the Corps is required to permit only the least environmentally damaging one for wetlands and waters.

After the least environmentally damaging practicable alternative has been determined, the Corps evaluate measures to further minimize and mitigate impacts, such as minor alignmentships,

bridging and reducing side slopes and median widths.

Finally, in accordance with the President's policy of no net loss wetlands, we strive to mitigate in kind for all unavoidable impacts. Subsequent to the determination of the least environmentally damaging practicable alternative, the Corps conducts a broad-based public interest review. All factors affecting the public will be included in our evaluation, and that is where you come in tonight, because it's your comment that help us arrive at our decisions.

The hearing tonight will be conducted in a manner so that all who desire to express their views will be given an opportunity to speak, and Larry will go ahead and lay out some of the rules and conduct to include limitations on the amount of time any one person can take.

To preserve the right of all to express their views, I ask that there be no interruptions.

When you came in, copies of both the public notice and the procedures to be followed at this hearing were available. If you did not receive those, again, they are available for you there at the registration desk, which is in the lobby. We

have already introduced the public hearing procedures and the public notice into the record, and I don't see a need to read them now.

The record of this hearing will remain open, and written comments may be submitted to me tonight, or by mail, until December 1st. And whether you present them tonight orally, or whether you present them tonight in writing, or whether you present them at some time later, but prior to December 1st, they will all receive equal consideration.

As we all know, it took so many years to get to where we are today, and now you need to assist us in this public review process. To date, as Larry has said, we have not made a decision with regard to this permit. It's my responsibility to evaluate both the environmental and socioeconomic impacts prior to making that decision. And, again, in order to be able to do that, I will need your input. So I thank you for your involvement, and I now ask Larry to go ahead and have — and let's get started.

MODERATOR ROSENBERG: Thank you, sir.

Our first speaker tonight will be Ned

Hurle from the Connecticut Department of Transportation, who will present an overview of the permit application and the DOT's preferred alternative.

Mr. Hurle.

NED HURLE: Hello, again. I have shortened this just a little bit.

For the record, my name is Ned Hurle, and I'm the director of environmental planning for the Connecticut Department of Transportation.

By way of general background, since 1990, ConnDOT, the Corps and our federal, state and local partners worked long and hard to find an acceptable solution to the transportation problems in the Route 6 corridor. Unfortunately, we have not been able to achieve consensus. In 1997, Governor Rowland met with H. Martin Lancaster, Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works. They agreed to form a committee consisting of representatives of the Corps' of the State of Connecticut and Congressman Gejdenson's office to seek a permissible solution. This effort resulted in a new alignment known at that time as Alternative 133A, which the department submitted to the Corps of Engineers in

March of 1998. Unfortunately, there remained concerns regarding the permissibility of this alignment, and the application was withdrawn.

In 1999, the towns of Andover, Bolton, Columbia, Manchester, and Windham asked the department to investigate the environmentally sensitive modifications to Alternative 133A that might make the project permissible. The result was Alternative 133A modified, or mod, which was submitted to the Corps in October of 1999. Subsequently, the department has made revisions to this alternative renaming it Alternative 133B, which is the recommended action for the department.

At the request of the Corps, the department included two additional alignments as supplemental information to the Section 404 permit application. Revisions were made to previously studied alternatives in order to more fairly compare impacts between alignments, and to aid in determining the LEDPA.

This new permit application, the subject of tonight's hearing, includes Alternative 133B, again, which is our recommended alignment, alternative 133 modified and Alternative 133/18-25

modified. All three alternatives share an identical alignment in the western portion of the study area. The differences between the alternatives all occur in the eastern half of the study area.

The department has provided large scale graphics of the alternatives in the room to the rear of this hearing room. Staff from my office are available and will remain available this evening, in case anybody would like to continue to look at the graphics.

The common portion of all three alignments run from the I-384 interchange of Bolton in Bolton Notch north of existing Route 6. They enter Coventry crossing Ash Brook and the Skungamaug River. The common alignment portion ends at the Coventry/Andover town line.

Alternative 133B continues on a path north of the Hop River, crossing Bear Swamp Brook and reentering Coventry. It ties into the existing Route 66 expressway section in Coventry at the Route 66 interchange. From the Coventry/Andover town line at the point where the common alignments diverge and Alternative 133B proceeded northward, Alternatives 133 modified and 133/18-25 modified

turned to the south. The alignments cross over the Hop River and Route 6 and curve eastward. The alignments cross over Route 87 and proceed easterly into Columbia.

At a point east of Whitney Road, Alternatives 133mod and 133/18-25mod separate. Alternative 133mod curves to the north, then crosses over Route 6, immediately crossing into Coventry and over the Hop River. The alignment curves a bit to the east and ties into the existing Route 6 expressway.

At the divergence point, Alternative 133/18-25mod flows – follows a parallel – a route parallel to existing Route 6, and then crosses over the Hop River and back into Coventry, where it also ties into the existing Route 6 expressway.

The impacts associated with Alternative 133B are, in the opinion of the Department of Transportation, reasonable, considering the benefits of the expressway, the scale of the project and the resources being affected. Minimization efforts and proposed mitigation to offset – and considering minimization efforts and proposed mitigation to offset unavoidable impacts.

The Section 404(b)1 guidelines set out environmental criteria for issuing 404 permits. As noted earlier, the department has prepared a detailed analysis, which documents why Alternative 133B is the least environmentally damaging practical alternative. This testimony was turned in to the Colonel during the afternoon session of the hearing.

The most prominent and valuable water resource in the study area is indicated in the Draft Environmental and Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statements, and by our own state DEP, is the Hop River. Alternative 133B avoids the river and follows a more northerly path to avoid the Hop River Valley.

Although there are no federally listed species utilizing the study area, there are three species of special concern to the State of Connecticut, one turtle and two snakes. These species are concentrated in the Hop River Valley, and will not be threatened by Alternative 133B. The DEP has expressed serious concerns in the past with any freeway alignment crossing the Hop River.

Another concern in the corridor is upland forested habitat. Alternative 133B avoids

most of forest blocks and their core areas. Impacts occur mostly along edges and not through blocks. Although federal resource agencies repeatedly raised concerns over the upland forest of the study area, they are not rare, nor are they unique, and are not of greater importance than the Hop River and its associated high value aquatic resources. Forest block impacts are not unique to 133B. The southerly alignments also cut towards habitat blocks, while also affecting wetlands of higher function and value, and the resources of the Hop River Valley.

The majority of wetlands affected by 133B are providing less valuable functions, particularly for aquatic wildlife and water quality protection compared to southern alignments. The northerly alignment minimizes impacts to residences and neighborhoods. Southerly alignments nearly double impacts to residences and introduce avoidable impacts to businesses in Andover and Columbia.

Water quality protection will be enhanced by avoiding wetlands and river crossings, and by using best available technologies in management practices. While similar management practices would be used on any new alignment,

avoiding the largest river, the Hop River, is the best approach to protecting that – the water quality of that resource from degradation.

Entirely new design concepts were applied to Alternative 133B to minimize impacts to the environment. Independent roadways with wide medians can reduce direct footprint impacts and help wildlife movement. Bridges over water courses reduce wetland and water course impacts, and also reverse impacts to riparian wildlife and fisheries corridors. The proposed wildlife overpass is a new better approach to accommodate wildlife movement. The 133B alignment, in conjunction with impact minimization and mitigation commitments, has reduced direct wetland impacts from the 77 acres originally denied by the Corps to approximately 37 acres.

Perhaps the most singular difference between the alternatives is their impact on the human environment. Alternative 133B would impact 26 residences and no businesses. Alternative 133mod would impact 44 residences and one business; and alternative 133/18-25 would impact 53 residences and four businesses.

There are no direct impacts to historic

properties by any of the alternatives; however, the state Historic Preservation Officer has indicated that Alternative 133B would be acceptable under the provision of the National Historic Preservation Act. ConnDOT has committed to using latest and best available technology to protect the environment, neighborhoods, wildlife, water quality, and meet the capacity and safety improvement needs of the transportation corridor.

Southerly Route 6 alignments are not less damaging practicable alternatives to Alternative 133B. While all alternatives will affect human and natural resources, the intensity of impacts vary. With regard to resources and considerations under the Corps' jurisdiction, Alternative 133B has less impact to the aquatic environment, the human environment, and does not cause other significant adverse environmental impacts.

Thank you for your consideration.

MODERATOR ROSENBERG: Thank you, sir.

Ladies and gentlemen, it is crucial to this public process if your voice is heard, and we are here to listen, to listen to your comments, to

understand your concerns, and to provide you an opportunity to put your thoughts on the record should you care to do so.

In order to make any decisions regarding this permit application, we, the Corps of Engineers, need to hear from you, the individuals most affected by the project.

A transcript of this hearing is being made to assure a detailed review of all comments. A copy of this transcript will be available at our Concord, Massachusetts headquarters for your review. We will also be getting this up on our web site. And for those that have filled out the card and requested information, we will get that web site address to you; or you can make your own arrangements with the stenographer for a copy at your expense.

When making a statement, please come forward to the microphone and state your name and the interest you represent, as there are many who wish to provide comment. You will be provided three minutes to speak, no more. I'll be calling the individual up next and the individual to follow. I would ask the individuals to follow to also come up

to the second microphone, or the vacant microphone, and be prepared to give your comments.

The traffic signal up front will indicate the following: The green light will come on indicating two minutes remaining; the amber light indicates one minute left; and the red light indicates that the time has expired.

Please identify if you are speaking for or representing a position of an organization. Now if you speak as an individual, please say so. I want to emphasize, again, that all who wish to speak will have the opportunity to do so.

For your convenience, there is also a stenographer available outside the hall should you wish to dictate a longer than three minute statement for the record, or if you just don't want to speak publicly. Rather than making this formal presentation, we have made these arrangements. These statements, along with any written statements submitted today or tonight, or those received by mail up until December 1st, will receive equal consideration with those presented.

We will now receive your comments according to our hearing protocol with one twist.

As we had the afternoon session, we have asked all members of agencies and local officials to speak at that time. We will now intermit the hearing protocol with the public. So it will be protocol, member of the public, back and forth for the rest of the evening.

Once again, if you have a long statement, please summarize it to fit the three-minute limitation, and submit the entire statement for the record.

Ladies and gentlemen, the first speaker will be John Elsesser from Coventry, and he will be followed by Dianne Grenier from Andover.

JOHN ELSESSER: Good evening. I am John Elsesser, town manager of Coventry. I'm recapping the testimony that we did this afternoon for the benefit of the citizens of our town. This afternoon, we were represented by Joan Lewis, the council chair, James Clark, the secretary of the council, and representative on Route 6 issues, and Linda Scussel, who presented the town's testimony based on science and fact, not emotion, not not-in-my-backyard syndrome issues. We are also joined by Senator Prague and Senator Guglielmo , who

also testified about both the expressway, especially Alternative 133B.

This afternoon, we went over and questioned whether the purpose and need had been fully evaluated over the change since the expressway to Providence is no longer reality. We questioned that the safety information and the current Route 6 improvements were not presented as part of the evaluation. We also talked about the approach the town had where we hired independent consultants that had not done business with the town before, both experts in their field, and we submitted the testimony of Doctor Thorson on the lack of hydro - hydrology analysis due to the cuts in slopes and the impacts on the wetlands. He also emphasized that the facts presented in the application were not really facts, but they were opinions, and they were biased, and his testimony is available.

We also had George Logan of Rema Environmental present testimony. He is a certified soil scientist, a wetland biologist and a wildlife biologist. He pointed out that there has been no field delineation of wetlands; that the plant life

surveys were completed in January, in some cases; and his comments were that his current record attached, the Section 404 submission lacks most of the background technical documentation necessary to review the application on its own merits. This puts the reviewer and the public in general at a disadvantage. Much of the data provided or referred to as part of the application is incomplete or dated. Potential impacts, indirect impacts to wetlands and aquatic resources, both short-term and long-term, are directly related to severity in a mount of cut and fill.

No analysis was presented to compare the various alternatives using this basic landscape level aspect of environmental planning. I mention there has been no field delineation surveys and wetland boundaries, rather a desktop based determination aided by a limited field review.

This afternoon, we also heard people point out that wetlands that were actually field delineated do not show on the maps. We also heard that in some cases maps that showed wildlife habitat in 1995 has now been removed from the maps, and DOT doesn't have an explanation for that. So we do have

information. We urge the Army Corps to read our information seriously, and we thank you for the opportunity.

MODERATOR ROSENBERG: Thank you.

The next speaker Dianne Grenier, and she will be followed by Bruce Bellm, member of the Mansfield Town Council.

DIANNE GRENIER: Good evening. My name is Dianne Grenier, and I represent the Andover Route 6 Coalition.

Once again, you have come to our community to ask us how we feel and what we think about the latest Route 6 expressway alignments. I would like to thank you for asking, but I feel you must know the answer to these questions, for each time you come to our community asking, we have the same response over and over again.

Residents tell you we want to express where it balances the environmental, social and economic concerns of the corridor, and we want it located where we planned for it for over 35 years, totally north of the Hop River in the same general area as the original alignment, which has been environmentally enhanced to become Alternate

133B, which we have before us here today.

Residents in the corridor are not thrilled at the notion of an expressway coming through our community. Any expressway coming through our community. Over 35 years ago, residents accepted the idea that an expressway was indeed required. Since that time, the correct placement of such an expressway has been the issue. The total – excuse me – the local residents realize that you cannot build an expressway through this corridor without impact to both the environment and the community. To minimize the damage and balance the impacts between the environment and the community become the objectives. The state's preferred alignment, Alternate 133B, is just that alternative. The proposed alignments have been carefully evaluated, and Alternate 133B has many attributes that make it more acceptable to the local residents than either of the southerly alignments. Attributes such as the total number of house takings is significantly lower. The number of business takings is zero. The overall length is shorter, 12.4, rather than 13 plus miles for the southerly alignments. Zero crossings of the Hop River. The

impact on tax revenues is lower. The horse farm on the corner of Route 6 and Bunker Hill Road will be preserved.

Because the southerly alignments pass through more diverse developed residential and commercial areas of Andover and Columbia, the community impacts are far greater. There is not, nor has there ever been, anyone, resident, local official, state agency or state official, including the Town of Coventry and the environmental groups, that have come out to support either of the two southerly alignments. The reason is clear. Both southerly alignments are just plain bad alignments. Both alignments are insensitive to the local character of our community. Both alignments do not evenly balance the social, economic and environmental concerns of the corridor.

Thank you for being here today. I hope you will not have to come back again and ask us how we feel and what we think about yet another Route 6 expressway alignment, for I assure you if you do, our position will not have changed. We will still want a Route 6 expressway, which balances the environmental, social and economic concerns of the

corridor and is located in the same general area as the original alignment, which we had planned for over 35 years. Alternate 133B is just that alignment.

Thank you.

(Applause.)

MODERATOR ROSENBERG: Thank you.

Our next speaker is – ladies and gentlemen, I would ask you to all withhold any applause. There are a lot of individuals who want to give comments tonight. I also ask you show them the same courtesy you would want yourself.

Our next speaker is Mr. Bruce Bellm, member of the Mansfield Town Council, and he will be followed by Pam Sawyer of Bolton.

Sir.

BRUCE BELLM: Good evening. I have been a member of the Mansfield Town Council for ten years. I was a member of the Route 6 Task Force, and I had intended to come here tonight and tell you of a vote that the Mansfield Town Council took on Monday, November 13, but fortunately, Mansfield's mayor, Betsey Paterson, is here and will do that.

As I looked at the report that I

received in the mail, I guess the short version, and I'm going to keep it short, now that I have been somewhat preempted by the presence of our mayor, is there is nothing new here. This is essentially the same old rehashed version of a project that never did meet the environmental requirements in the opinion of many, many people; and, quite frankly, I wonder why we are doing this all over again. It just seems it's time to make a final decision that there is no good place to put this highway in this area and make the decision that the people who settled the area in the first place were very wise in choosing the places that they settled when they created the existing Route 6, because, quite frankly, that really is the only reason and the only place to put a roadway to connect the Hartford area along Eastern Connecticut.

I hope that this will be the final time we will go around with this and that eventually you all will just pull the plug on this.

Thank you.

(Applause.)

MODERATOR ROSENBERG: Thank you, sir.

Ladies and gentlemen, please.

Our next speaker is Pam Sawyer. She will be followed by Elizabeth Paterson.

PAM SAWYER: Thank you. Good evening, Colonel, Ms. Lee.

When you are looking at this project, I guess I have to be very honest and admit that it is in my backyard. If we talk about this particular expressway, it will follow behind my home. But if I'm going to talk to you this evening, I want to talk about the next 40 years. We have an opportunity at this time to address not only safety, not only capacity, but also the economic needs. But the fourth piece of that puzzle is the environmental piece.

It's an interesting situation that this greenway has stayed green, because of the concept of a highway going there. If we take the concept of the highway off, the houses will be built; but if we look at the concept of a highway, we have an exceptional opportunity. We could build the highway, and at the same time we can look at open space. We have the ability to use federal highway dollars, far more than the state could provide or the towns themselves could provide, to buy open

space surrounding the area, and perhaps call it a parkway. The state's offer in the past has been up to 2,000 acres. This is extremely significant for Eastern Connecticut. If we are very serious about this area and preserving its environmental impact, I think we could do a long-term project here. We could be able to save the lives, as well as save a lot of the land.

I would like to thank you very much.

MODERATOR ROSENBERG: Thank you.

Our next speaker is Elizabeth Paterson, Town of Mansfield Mayor, and she will be followed by Leigh Ann Hutchinson from Andover.

MAYOR ELIZABETH PATERSON: Thank you for allowing me this opportunity.

I wish to tell you that Representative Denise Merrill, who represents our town, wanted to be here this evening is ill, and unfortunately could not be. I am conveying to you that she supports the position of the Town of Mansfield, and she will be putting her comments into writing prior to your cutoff date, which I believe you said is December 1st.

Thank you. My comments will be brief.

I wish to inform you that the Mansfield Town Council adopted the following resolution at its regular meeting on November 13th, 2000.

Resolved: That the Town Council of the Town of Mansfield is opposed to the construction of a new expressway connecting I-384 in Bolton and the existing Route 6 expressway in Columbia. The town encourages state and federal transportation agencies to develop alternative strategies to improve the region's mobility in a forward looking and environmentally sensitive manner.

If you have any questions on this, you may contact the town manager, Martin Berliner, at 860-429-3336.

I would add that this is a majority opinion of the Town Council. It was not a unanimous opinion. The reasons for the council members gave for being in opposition to this was that we do not, in the Town of Mansfield, encourage sprawl development, and we feel that would happen with the proposals that are before us at this point.

Also, we believe that it is not an environmentally sound proposal. My colleagues, who are here this evening to speak will speak in more

detail.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak.

And may I leave this with you?

MODERATOR ROSENBERG: Yes, ma'am.

MAYOR PATERSON: Thank you.

MODERATOR ROSENBERG: Thank you.

The next speaker, Leigh Ann Hutchinson from Andover. She will be followed by Andrew Gasper, also of Andover, Board of Selectmen.

Our next speaker is Andrew Gasper, Board of Selectmen, Andover, and he will be followed by Tom Labadorf, L-A-B-A-D-O-R-F, from Columbia.

Sir.

ANDREW GASPER: Good evening. My name is Andrew Gasper from Andover. I am a lifelong resident of Andover and a current member of the Board of Selectmen.

I have seen this Route 6 issue basically all my life. We recognize that no matter what decision that we make, homes and people's lives are affected, and we have been dealing with this for, as Dianne said, about 30 years. But we must make a decision. The Route 6 goes through our town and has been a spectacle for years and years and years. Do

nothing, it is not an option, that Route 6 has been in trouble for years. God knows what the future will bring.

I only want to say that our town went to referendum twice, and both times voted for the options that were north of the river. They did not vote for the options that were south of the river. In summary, there is a lot of enthusiasm to make something happen. Even after 30 years, this room is full of people, twice today, and the decision to do something today is still going to produce a highway that is probably a decade away. So we need to do something, and we are in unanimity that now is the time.

MODERATOR ROSENBERG: Thank you, sir.

The next speaker is Tom Labadorf from Columbia, followed by Hans DePold from Bolton, the town historian.

TOM LABADORF: Good evening. My name is Tom Labadorf. I live on Route 36 in Columbia, Connecticut, and I'm here to represent the Columbia Coalition, the Route 6 Coalition.

I'm here to support Connecticut DOT's permit application for Alternative 133B as the

LEDPA. I oppose either of the southerly routes, Alternative 133 modified and Alternative 133/18-25 modified. I agree with the Army Corps of Engineers that an upgrade of the present road will not meet the purpose and need for the present and future travel on Eastern Connecticut – in Eastern Connecticut. The only real alternative for traffic safety is an expressway.

Alternatives that go into Columbia would seriously impact Columbia in a number of different ways. First of all, it would create unacceptable adverse social impacts by wiping out the entire community. Both Columbia options are more – take more homes than Alternative 133B, and the quality of life would be significantly diminished. Another impact for the southerly routes would create unacceptable adverse economic hardship that would take properties that – that currently put in tax revenues for our town and will also affect potential tax revenues, since it expects commercial properties.

We would also – these alternatives would also create unacceptable adverse environmental impacts, because of the crossings across Hop River

and other wetlands, and aquifers that are our water supply, drinking water supply. They would also create serious community disruption, forcing residents of 53 homes to move; and an expressway would also create a barrier that would isolate residents from the town center and could create a particular hardship on the Baptist fellowship, a leading social center, which would also be isolated from the town center.

You are bound, sir, by law to issue a permit based on Clean Water Act, and since practicability is a part of that law, you cannot legally issue a permit for either of the Columbia options, since these issues that I mentioned to you are practicable issues.

Now, you are stuck with a decision. The EPA has been on record to say that they will not permit the expressway north. If you permit an expressway south, you are permitting an option that would have adverse social economic impacts. And if you do nothing, then you present a situation that will lengthen the number of years that we have been involved with this, which is 35.

My recommendation, sir, is to allow an

application permit for Alternative 133B, because it has the least social economic impacts, and because it has equal aquatic impacts, I believe that 133B would be the LEDPA.

Thank you.

MODERATOR ROSENBERG: Thank you, sir.

Next speaker is Hans DePold from – the town historian from Bolton, and he will be followed by John T. Murphy of Coventry.

HANS DePOLD: Good evening. Thank you for coming here and listening to us once again.

My name is Hans DePold. I am the Town Historian of Bolton. Tonight, the selectmen are meeting so they won't be up until ten, but they will be sending their comments in writing.

I would like to say that Bolton has always been in favor of the proposal on the north side of the river. We have had referendums before, and it was like 82 percent. And the reasons are, as we are very familiar with the area and the incredible value of the Town of Andover, our neighboring town, a village that we would like to see preserved just like our village in Bolton was preserved. I would like to give you a little bit of

the history of the area going back a while. And in 1634, John Odham was asked to leave the Plymouth colony, and he came to the area through Bolton Notch to trade between the Bay Colony and the Todunk and Mohegan Indians. And he was British, as opposed to Dutch, who already had a colony here in Hartford. So the Indians were in competition with one another, and they invited Reverend Thomas Hooker to come to the colonists, the British colonists. And they came right through this area, and it became known as the Old Connecticut Path at that time. So for several years, people came through the area near the Notch, Coventry and Bolton.

In 1780, the French were invited to come and help us win the Revolutionary War, and they sailed into Newport, and they had a march to Yorktown with General Washington's Continental Army, and they came through the area.

In 1780 in September, General Rochambeau and General Chastellux came through Andover and stayed in the tavern right there on Route 6 in Andover, a historic tavern, and there is a history behind it. The wagon broke down, and they had to replace a wheel, and on and on. They met with

George Washington in Hartford at that time.

In July – in March of 1781, George Washington and Alexander Hamilton rode through right down Bailey Road, Hutchinson Road, rode into Lebanon and then into Newport and met with General Roshenbow. Then they came back on March 17th of 1781 on that road.

In May of 1781, General Rochambeau came back on that road again with his officers and stayed, again, in that white tavern there. It's a very historic route.

Then in July 21st of 1781, General Rochambeau brought the entire Army, came in three waves of a thousand men in each wave over four – rather, four waves over four days, and some of them stayed right down at the bottom of Bailey Road where it hits Route 6. Most of them stayed in the camp five in Bolton on that trip. And then they marched to Yorktown – I'm almost done. They marched to Yorktown. We won the revolution. We marched back again. They stayed in Andover at camp 46 right down there on Hutchinson Road, and we would like to preserve that, if we could.

In any event, the erosion of the

heritage of Andover is a concern to us, and we would like to see a real solution to this now.

MODERATOR ROSENBERG: Thank you, sir.

HANS DePOLD: Thank you.

MODERATOR ROSENBERG: Our next speaker is John P. Murphy from Coventry. He will be followed by Dennis Foran from the Andover Economic Development Commission, Advisory Board for the Town of Andover.

Mr. Murphy.

JOHN MURPHY: Good evening. For the last two weeks, our nation has watched and waited to see who our next president will be. We have heard the talking heads and spin doctors from both sides talk about the rule of law, as well as strict constructionism versus judicial activism. Tonight I ask you to be strict constructionists.

Alternative 133B offered by DOT far surpasses judicial or departmental activism. They have purposely refused to use updated population safety data, while wetland areas have magically disappeared and forest block streams reconfigured to fit their fantasy.

As Nancy Benedict pointed out in her

testimony this afternoon, the Department of Transportation must still believe their name is the department of highways.

The rule of law in this case is perfectly clear. If an expressway is to be built, the least environmentally damaging practicable alternative must be chosen. DOT has dressed up the single unpermittable alternative and is asking the Corps of Engineers to believe that it is somehow different.

DOT wants it nine different ways to Sunday. They want to use outdated information regarding population growth, but wetland and forest blocks from the same time frame disappeared and then reconfigured to suit their needs. They ignore the minimum median size when they can't fit their expressway where they want to fit it.

DOT also refuses to see the job growth in our state has shifted to the southeast part of the state to the casinos. Pratt & Whitney has shifted virtually all their manufacturing jobs to Middletown and East Hartford facilities like a ghost town. Don't worry though. DOT built an exit and onramp from the HOV lane to get to jobs that don't

exist anymore in East Hartford.

There are too many local officials from the kingdom of NIMBY, who prosper and profess their undying commitment to highway safety, until the least environmentally damaging practicable alternative goes through their town. Building an expressway will never bring back the people who have been injured or killed on Route 6. Until recently, DOT's reticent and reluctance to improve safety on the existing Route 6 has pitted neighbor versus neighbor and community versus community.

DOT has failed to show that Alternative 133B is anything but the same old rhetoric failure dressed up in a different manner. I urge the Corps of Engineers to remember why it consistently turned down all of their alignments north of the Hop River, because it is the rule of law. If you are to give Alternative 133B any consideration, please use relevant and current data projections as pointed out in the Town of Coventry testimony.

DOT's inconsistent use of data and projections, while eliminating forest blocks and wetlands, is unconscionable, expedient and immoral. Please be consistent, please be fair, and please

remember to uphold the rule of law.

Thank you.

MODERATOR ROSENBERG: Thank you, sir.

Our next speaker – ladies and gentlemen, please withhold your applause.

Our next speaker, Dennis Foran from the Andover Economic Development Commission. He will be followed by Cathy Derench, D-E-R-E-N-C-H.

DENNIS FORAN: Thank you. Thank you for the opportunity to have input into this hearing. I have a statement, and I speak as Chairman of the Andover Economic Development Commission. My statement is addressed to Robert DeSista, Chief of Permits Enforcement Section, Regulatory Branch, US Army Corps of Engineers.

MALE VOICE: Can you speak into the microphone. We can't hear.

DENNIS FORAN: Regarding public notice of the public hearing here tonight, requests for permit by ConnDOT for the Route 6 expressway corridor through Bolton, Coventry, Andover, Columbia. In response to this notice requesting oral written comment from the public, please be advised that the Andover Economic Development

Commission members voted at our special meeting on November 17th to recommend to the US Corps of Engineers that the permit request and application by ConnDOT for Alternative 133B be granted. Our sense is that the general public, and most concerned federal, state and local agencies and governing bodies, have come to realize that there are no other viable good alternatives to a new expressway to link the flow and volume of traffic emerging from the existing easterly end of Route 384 in Bolton to the westerly end of the Willimantic Route 6 bypass expressway in Columbia.

The other option, which the public has endured for over 30 years of endless never increasing hazard, construction, congestion along the existing 12 mile, two-lane stretch of old Route 6 known officially as Hop River Road, but more recently and popularly as "Suicide Six," has grown increasingly intolerable. Despite the recent widening and safety improvements by ConnDOT, no further improvements to the existing Route 6 will ever alleviate the fundamental problem of ever-growing use and volume of this two-lane unlimited access primary state road through local

traffic, which attests to accommodate everything from rush hour commuters, school buses, to intermittent convoys of tractor trailers. An expressway connection to the bypass accessing Willimantic, the next largest population center east of Manchester, is the only option which would provide the necessary separation through local traffic, hereby permitting the highway traffic safety, and reducing congestion and construction along Route 6, existing Route 6.

As an economic development commission, we also have a local interest resolving this decades old, and certainly regarding the expressway. Such resolution will certainly benefit our efforts towards community planning and development of our local economic resources.

The choice at this point therefor shouldn't be whether or not to build an expressway. We should be resolved to see this project through. The choice should be which alternative to build. We encourage ConnDOT, in our view, that Alternative 133B represents the best effort to date at a highway solution which mitigates the overall detrimental impacts of highway construction not only with regard

to -

MODERATOR ROSENBERG: Sir.

DENNIS FORAN: - economically, and in terms of the overall disruption to our communities and neighbors as well.

Thank you.

MODERATOR ROSENBERG: Thank you, sir.

Next speaker is Cathy Derench, and she will be followed by Matthew O'Brien, liaison to the Town of Coventry.

CATHY DERENCH: My name is Cathy Derench. I live at 554 Pucker Street in Coventry, Connecticut.

The impact of 133B can be viewed on sheet 11 of 12 in the package handed out by the Army Corps.

We are against the proposed 133B on an individual basis. The construction of this proposed route would take our ponds and a good portion of our land. Our pond being the sole source of water, not only for our livestock, but during the dry months of summer, serves as one of the only water sources that does not dry up for drinking water for the area wildlife. The taking of this property would also

impact a major food source for our livestock and area wildlife.

Additionally, our livelihood would be affected as we use this pond for canine water training. We are Newfoundland breeders and owners.

Overall, the impact on the wildlife and the general Coventry living environment would be compromised and destroyed permanently. The unique nature of Coventry would be gone, and so would a piece of historical heritage. Niches that our wildlife has filled for centuries would be destroyed. The proposed solution of tunnels for the animals is not a realistic solution, in our opinion.

We feel that the existing Route 6 could be improved, and this in turn would preserve this historical corner of Connecticut for future generations. Save our town and save our wildlife and save our environment.

Thank you.

MODERATOR ROSENBERG: Thank you, ma'am.

Next speaker, Matthew O'Brien. You will be followed by David — David Torstenson.

DAVID TORSTENSON: Sir, I spoke at length this afternoon. I would like to pass, but —

MODERATOR ROSENBERG: Thank you, sir.

DAVID TORSTENSON: But reserve my rights at the end of the meeting.

MODERATOR ROSENBERG: Thank you, sir.

Following Matthew O'Brien will be Tammi O'Brien, also from Coventry.

MATTHEW O'BRIEN: Colonel, I am Mat O'Brien from the Town of Coventry. I'm the town's liaison to the Town Council. I was on the Route 6 Advisory Committee as well, and followed this issue very closely for the last ten years.

Unlike a lot of people, I'm actually very glad that you are going forward with this permit process. The northerly alignment has been defeated by – based on environmental science, since I have started the new project. The Army Corps of Engineers helped to work with us on the committee, as did the Fish and Wildlife and EPA, for they have been perfectly consistent for those ten years, including the Army Corps of Engineers, in saying that the environmental resources north of the Hop River are some of the most valuable in this corridor, and that any northerly alignment would be completely detrimental and totally devastating to

those resources.

The reason why I am glad that you are going forward with this is every time we have killed this alignment, it seems to come back. It's kind of like a nightmare that you keep on having over and over again. I am hoping that finally the Corps, and I am sure that you are a man of great honor and integrity, and I'm very glad that you are here to listen to us again tonight, and taking your time, would once again find in the same way that science still will sustain that decision and put a knife through the heart of this alignment once and for all, because that is the only way we are really going to move forward in this corridor. The only way to move forward is to look at the actual alignments that can be permitted and the alternatives that came with the permit. The EPA and Army Corps have said consistently said that other Alignments 133, 133/18-25 and upgrade, until recently the upgrade, could all be permitted. DOT refuses to go forward with any of those, as long as this alignment is still on the table. We are asking you to kill this alignment once and for all. It's not the least environmentally damaging alternative,

and we can't move forward, until you do that, and then we can move forward, finally, to come to resolution in this corridor.

Thank you, sir.

MODERATOR ROSENBERG: Thank you, sir.

The next speaker, Tammi O'Brien from Coventry, and she will be followed by Jim Fitting from the Andover Conservation Commission.

TAMMI O'BRIEN: Hello. First, I would like to say that I am opposed to Alternative 133B. As a Coventry resident, I have been against any expressway between Bolton and Windham. I felt there has been no reason to disrupt so many lives for a road that goes nowhere, let alone the environment. It won't save lives on Route 6, since the majority of accidents happen either late at night, or on weekends, or due to driver error. The road itself must be safer.

If safety is indeed what the residents of Columbia and Andover want, they should be concentrating on that, not on their private meetings with DOT on how to get as much of this expressway into Coventry that they can, not caring one bit about the families moved out or displaced. It makes

me furious that state agencies can meet with certain towns and not invite the towns that are going to be affected by this whole thing. It just does not seem fair at all. We pay DOT's salary just like everyone else, and we deserve some respect.

The Town of Coventry has already suffered when all those homes were taken for Alternative 54. Now you want to take another 24. When is enough? Home neighborhoods are gone forever. It just makes no sense to me. So I urge you, please, to deny the permit for Alternative 133B.

Thank you.

MODERATOR ROSENBERG: Thank you.

Our next speaker is Jim Fitting from the Andover Conservation Commission, and he will be followed by Sydney Gilbey of Columbia.

JIM FITTING: Good evening. I'm Jim Fitting. I'm here representing the Town of Andover Conservation Commission.

The Andover Conservation Commission supports DOT's application for Alignment 133B. Route 6, as it presently exists, effectively divides our town in half, particularly with respect to

pedestrian and bicycle travel. Residents of the northern part of town cannot safely walk or bike to school, to the Town Hall, or to the senior center. From the southern part of town, it's not safe to walk or ride to the library or to the Town's ball fields. Even car travel is hindered. In my own experience during rush hour traveling to Hartford and back, I have often had to wait for two or as long as three, four minutes for a safe opening in traffic to pull out onto Route 6. These things underscore the need for some sort of a – excuse me – of an expressway to alleviate the traffic problems that we have on Route 6.

Although an upgrade of Route 6 is not presently proposed by the DOT, some individuals and groups have suggested in the past that this would be the best alternative. An expansion of the existing Route 6 is not an acceptable alternative, because it would serve further to divide the Town of Andover.

Furthermore, this option would ultimately result in commercial strip development along the roadside, which is not in keeping with the rural character of our town.

Another point I would like to make is

that the Hop River is the most significant natural resource in the Town of Andover. As such, it is A key focal point for the development of outdoor recreation in Andover, such as linear trails and fishing. But the various alternatives that have been proposed at one time or another, Alignment 133B has the least impact to the Hop River. Other expressway alignments require two bridge crossings over the Hop River. The effect of these bridge crossings would be, if they were constructed, to diminish the environmental quality of the Hop River corridor. Consequently, the Andover Conservation Commission supports the construction of the 133B alignment.

Thank you.

MODERATOR ROSENBERG: Thank you, sir.

Our next speaker is Sydney Gilbey from Columbia, and he will be followed by – I am sorry. She will be followed by Michael Roman of Andover.

Ma'am.

SYDNEY GILBEY: Hi. I am Sydney Gilbey. I live at 52 Oakland Lane in Columbia. I am a relatively new resident in Columbia, so I have had a real crash course in all of these issues.

Connecticut is a state rich in environmental resources. The three alternatives for a new expressway all have significant environmental impacts, regardless of which one is chosen. While each impacts in a slightly different way, the overall environmental impact of each is similar and not to be considered equivalently sensitive for all environmental issues.

The one place that these plans appear to differ is their impact on the economy, homes and residences within their communities. Alternative 133B is the least destructive to homes, businesses and communities impacted by the expressway. Alternative 133 modified and Alternative 133/18-25 modified will seriously adversely affect the Town of Columbia. It will impact Columbia in a far more devastating manner than Alternative 133B affects any town it impacts. The two modified options will create a barrier through the Town of Columbia. Additionally, these alternatives cause greater – significantly greater loss of as many as 53 homes and up to four businesses, compared to 26 homes lost and zero businesses, if Alternative 133B is the choice.

I implore you, given that the environmental impact of these plans is equivalent, please study and seriously consider the socioeconomic impacts between these plans. We need an expressway. Existing Route 6 is unsafe. Alternative 133B is the most logical, least environmentally harmful or equivalent, least socioeconomically harmful of all these three plans when they are considered in their entirety.

Thank you.

MODERATOR ROSENBERG: Thank you, ma'am.

The next speaker is Michael Roman. He will be followed by Roberta Dwyer of Coventry.

MICHAEL ROMAN: Hi. This is a difficult problem, and I think I am going to propose a practical alternative.

I view this section of expressway around Willimantic as a bypass, and I view the proposed expressway from Willimantic to Bolton Notch as the Andover/Bolton/Coventry - Andover, Bolton Columbia bypass, the ABC bypass. And I think if we need the ABC bypass, that a better route might be to go from the Willimantic bypass up Route 32 to 195 and pick up I-84 in Tolland, and that way that bypass could

serve a much greater population in the UConn area and Mansfield area.

Thank you.

MODERATOR ROSENBERG: Thank you, sir.

Our next speaker is Roberta Dwyer. She will be followed by Timothy Dwyer.

ROBERTA DWYER: My name is Roberta Dwyer. I live in Coventry, and my family moved to Coventry in 1965. We were told at the time the highway's coming, and we didn't worry about it too much. However, around 1970, meetings started happening; and in 1989, finally land was taken. At that point in time, I was working at a bank, and I happened to work with several families whose land was taken, and I know what they went through.

We were lucky. Our homes were not taken. My mother, who was in her mid 70s, had back land taken; however, she got a fair price for her property, because she got an attorney, had to go to court, and it was done. My husband and I then decided that since the land had been taken, we could live with a highway in our backyard, so we built a house next to my mother's. My mother is now 84. She is extremely deaf and is not aware that this is

taking place tonight, and I haven't told her. I'm not at all sure how she would handle something like this. She has been through it once.

My family – this is a very selfish – I'm being very selfish. I am speaking for me and my family. Perhaps my neighbors, but for me and my family. My daughter and her family have looked forward to moving back to Coventry. If this goes through, we will not do this. We will leave the town. There is nothing to keep us there, but our church. We will go. My husband works at the other end of the state. He does a tremendous commute every day. It will be easier for us, but we would like to stay in the country. Put it in my backyard but not in my living room.

Thank you.

MODERATOR ROSENBERG: Thank you, ma'am.

The next speaker is Timothy Dwyer from Coventry. He will be followed by Michael Williams of Coventry.

Sir.

TIM DWYER: I am Tim Dwyer. I live at 766 Pucker Street in Coventry, and I would like to submit to you some copies of some sketches showing

some areas that there are wetlands that are not shown on the permit application on sheet 11 of 12 of Alternative 133B. These are sketches that I have drawn up from drawings that were made when we built the house two-and-a-half years ago, and those drawings show these areas delineated by a certain type soil scientist. I would like to invite and give permission to the Corps of Engineers to visit our property to inspect the property, if they would like to. And I would also show on here that the wetlands areas appear to go onto the neighboring properties, and I believe the neighbors will agree to have their properties inspected as well.

Additionally, I would like to add that I make a long commute. I travel to the full length of Route 6 daily; and with the present work that is going on on Route 6, I have observed over the past few years that the accident rate has significantly diminished, and that the overall safety of the road is greatly improved. I see a lot more accidents on other roads that I travel on a daily basis than I do on Route 6, and I believe the statistics support this. I believe that the Route 6 accident rate and statistics in regard to Route 6 right now are — are

underneath the state average for similar roads.

That is all I have got.

MODERATOR ROSENBERG: Thank you, sir.

Our next speaker is Michael Williams from Coventry. He will be followed by Joanne Williams from Coventry.

MICHAEL WILLIAMS: Good evening, Colonel. I oppose the ConnDOT's application for the Route 6 expressway option known as Alternative 133B.

Some of my reasons are the application for 133B separates the Bear Swamp ecosystem from the Hop River riparian system. Time and again, the technical documentation from the agencies of the Army Corps, the EPA, the US Fish and Wildlife Service has stated that a project separating these two systems will not pass the Clean Water Act and, therefore, would not receive a permit.

The Army Corps' only independent technical team, the Waterways Experiment Station, has reiterated this fact as well. These federal resource agencies have gone on to say that any alternative that remains exclusively north of the Hop River will not receive a permit. This option is not significantly different from any of the previous

north of the Hop River alignments the ConnDOT has applied for in the past. For an expressway solution to receive approval, by law the Army Corps must define it as being the least environmentally damaging practicable alternative. These numerous variations have previously been denied or withdrawn, because they did not meet the requirements of becoming a LEDPA. Because of these precedents, 133B cannot be identified as the LEDPA and cannot receive a permit from the Army Corps.

While ConnDOT's stated purpose is to enhance safety on Route 6, the Army Corps cannot lose sight of what the Army Corps seeks to protect, that being water resources. The technical documentation from the federal resource agency states that the Hop River and Bear Swamp systems are dependent upon each other. If these two ecosystems are not kept as a unit, they eventually degrade, and will not support the rich and diverse environment that is now maintained. All forms of the environment, including humans, depend on these water resources to remain intact.

Safety on this road can be achieved by continuing the improvements that ConnDOT presently

has underway, but are as yet incomplete. Already a noticeable improvement in driver behavior has occurred. But if the DOT persists in an expressway solution, there are several other alignments south of the Hop River that have been identified by the Army Corps of Engineers, the EPA, and the US Fish and Wildlife as being the LEDPA. Therefore, I urge you to deny a permit for Alternative 133B.

Thank you.

MODERATOR ROSENBERG: Thank you, sir.

Next speaker, Joanne Williams, and she will be followed by Nancy Nelson of Andover.

JOANNE WILLIAMS: The Connecticut Department of Transportation has put forth an application for an expressway identified as Alternative 133B. I oppose this application.

This alternative would be aligned north of the existing Route 6 and the Hop River through the towns of Bolton, Andover and Coventry. The destruction to this environmentally sensitive area would be enormous, and the Army Corps of Engineers has denied a permit in the past. The Army Corps of Engineers is on record as stating that they will not permit an expressway exclusively north of the

Hop River, yet the Connecticut Department of Transportation has put forth an application that duplicates the routes in the past with an adjustment here and there. I sincerely hope that the Army Corps of Engineers will stick by their expressed words and deny this permit.

Thank you very much.

MODERATOR ROSENBERG: Thank you, ma'am.

Our next speaker, Nancy Nelson from Andover. She will be followed by Gino LuRicco, L-U-R-I-C-C-O.

NANCY NELSON: Hi. I am Nancy Nelson. I live in Andover on Bear Swamp Road.

Again, the DOT has proposed options for Route 6. Such a waste of money and time, because any route exclusively north of the Hop River violates the Clean Water Act, and is unacceptable. This was is made clear in the past, and needs to be made clear again. This new and improved 133B is north of the Hop River and separates the Bear Swamp. It is simply mutations of a previously rejected plan.

The people of Andover who support 133B speak of the need for safety, concerns of high

volume on the road, and the need to get trucks and local traffic off the road to decrease accidents. The safety is the real reason. Their support should be consistent and unconditional. Dianne Grenier and Pam Sawyer, those who want the highway only want the highway totally north of Hop River. It can't be through Bear Swamp. They don't want it any more than I do. So much for their concern for safety. But if the highway is vital to our safety as they say it is, they should welcome it wherever it can be built. The DOT's proposed routes that put it to the south, there is strong opposition if you focus the group out of the neighborhood back to the north for the highway is critical and self-serving.

There was an article in the River East at town meeting when the DOT was late and Diane briefed the town on all the reports. There was also a police log. It reports that on Sunday, October 15, 2000, there was an arrest on Route 6, 1:31 a.m. for DWI; a local Andover guy from Lake View Drive, who was doing 88 miles per hour, passing in a no passing zone. This is why there are accidents and deaths on Route 6. All the highways the DOT can come up with, all the homes taken, millions spent,

and all the wetlands lost will not stop this irresponsible idiot from driving drunk 88 miles an hour in the wrong lane. We were lucky no one was killed or hurt. Statistics show that accidents do not happen during busy commuting time, do not involve trucks weekend and off-peak hours. Crossing the midline are common factors just like with our friend the other night.

The changes that have been made to Route 6, turn lanes, wider shoulders, increased police presence have made it a safer road, and I am grateful for this. And I look forward to future improvements on our existing road. This is the road that the people of Andover will be driving on. This is the one we need to make safe. Please stand firm in this position against putting in anything exclusively north of the Hop River or anywhere. We don't need this highway.

MODERATOR ROSENBERG: Thank you.

Our next speaker is Gino LuRicco, and he will be followed by Patrick Flaherty, State Representative from Coventry.

GINO LuRICCO: Hi. I am Gino LuRicco from Coventry, and I just want to state for the

record that I oppose all of the alternatives.

In looking at the maps, the number of wetlands that I see when I'm walking through the woods on my property and my family's property, some of those wetland areas are not marked clearly on the maps, and I just wanted to state that.

Thank you.

MODERATOR ROSENBERG: Thank you, sir.

Mr. Flaherty, State Representative from Coventry, and he will be followed by Jeff Graham, also of Coventry.

Representative Flaherty.

REPRESENTATIVE PATRICK FLAHERTY:
Flaherty.

MODERATOR ROSENBERG: Flaherty. I'm sorry.

REPRESENTATIVE PATRICK FLAHERTY: Thank you.

I really wasn't expecting to jump the queue. Actually, I was out-of-state visiting my family.

I am a State Representative. I represent Coventry and Columbia, as well as Lebanon and Vernon. Coventry and Columbia are the towns

most affected by this proposal.

Eight years ago, when I first ran for this office, I was in favor of the highway. I felt that we needed it for economic development and for safety. In the past eight years, however, we have made some very significant safety improvements along the current corridor, and we have also seen really prosperity return not only to our state, but to our region. And while I thought we needed a highway for economic development, in fact, economic development has occurred even without the road.

This is an issue that has been before us for many, many years, and I just am — have gotten to the point where I have become convinced that highway is never going to be built, and that this discussion is really become quite unproductive, and quite divisive.

I oppose the current proposal mostly because in my town, Coventry where I live, we have had a swath through the middle of our town of property that was taken by the DOT many years ago. That property has been neglected. It has really become quite, I think, embarrassing. And as a state official, I share that embarrassment as to the

condition of that property and what has happened to it. And the current proposal takes an additional 24 homes, would take another swath through the town; and in my opinion, is no better than the right-of-way that the state currently owns. I realize there are wetland issues and other things that have caused them to move the proposal, but none of those changes, in my opinion, change the fact as to why people opposed it. Not a single person who opposed the previous right — you know, the route where the right-of-way is currently owned, not a single person who opposed that right-of-way supports the new one, at least that I have talked to. And so I think we are sort of tinkering around with people without making any improvements. And so I think that the time has come to just admit that we are not going to have an expressway, turn all these down and move on to see how we can achieve the other goals of safety and economic development by other means.

Thank you.

MODERATOR ROSENBERG: Thank you, sir.

(Applause.)

MODERATOR ROSENBERG: Our next speaker is Jeff Graham from Coventry, and he will be

followed by Patrick Shaw.

JEFF GRAHAM: Good evening, Colonel, members of the Board. My name is Jeff Graham. I am a 30-year resident of both Andover and Coventry. Currently, I live at 192 Nathan Hale Road in Coventry, a beautifully wooded area with horse farms being two of my neighbors.

I am opposed to Route 6 Alternate 133B, as I am opposed to any new highway project that would connect Columbia to Bolton.

Back in 1970, my family moved to Andover after my father retired from the Navy. We found an okay house situated on a beautiful piece of property. It was on five acres with the Skungamaug River as our background. Right down the road, there is the Tynes Farm Camp (phonetic), which is now known as the Channel 3 Country Camp. I remember meeting our neighbors. After the initial hellos, the conversation quickly turned to, did we know about the new Route 6 highway that was going to be in our backyard. Well, we did not know about it. I guess the previous homeowner didn't feel it was a good selling point. Needless to say, that project, whatever it was designated, was stopped, as should

Alternate 133B.

You know, I hate to think that I might not have had the opportunity to have grown up in Andover, if that old Route 6 project had scared my father away from that beautiful piece of property.

Well, recently I attended a Town Meeting in Coventry where 133B was the evening's topic. The board that ran the meeting had a couple of members that advised those of us who will speak tonight to avoid the not-in-my-backyard argument. They told us that you, on tonight's board, would place the subjective aspects on the back burner as being less important. We were advised to stick to the objective aspects, such as impact on property values, loss of tax revenues, business losses along Route 6, et cetera. But I believe you already have these facts and figures. I will just sum up my objective statement that the estimated \$300 million that would be spent on this wasteful piece of pork, Alternative 133B, can be better used.

Like I said, I have resided in the area for 30 years, except for two years at college, and four years in the Marine Corps infantry. During that time, I had the opportunity to see much of this

country and a little bit overseas. I can tell you that Coventry, Connecticut is a much nicer place to live than either Honduras or Beirut, Lebanon; but all kidding aside, this part of rural Connecticut is one of the nicest places I have ever seen anywhere. Right now, I have my own family. We have a home with our own four acres all on Nathan Hale Road in Coventry. We are only a few hundred yards from where 133B is slated to go. Alternate 133B will not be in my backyard. It will be in my front yard. It will be a very tangible and unwanted addition to the area. This project will lessen my property values, increase my tax burden, and subjectively impact the aesthetic and environmental value of my family's neighborhood.

Finally, I would like to say that over the course of 30 years I have lived off of Route 6 using that infamous stretch of road nearly everyday, I can tell you that the improvements that have been accomplished over the last few years have greatly improved the 13 miles in question. It is my opinion that fixing the existing 6 is the most sensible approach and would have the least negative impact on the area.

Thank you.

MODERATOR ROSENBERG: Thank you, sir.

(Applause.)

MODERATOR ROSENBERG: Ladies and gentlemen, our next speaker is Patrick Shaw. He will be followed by Janet Grace of Coventry.

PATRICK SHAW: Thank you.

I am also a resident of Coventry. I have lived in the area for many years. But I believe a \$300 million expressway that negatively impacts the environmental, commercial and residential aspects of Coventry should not be approved.

I have driven on Route 6 for 23 years, and was personally in a very serious car accident on Route 6 in 1994. The lights, road widenings and turnoffs that have recently been put in place have made Route 6 a safe road, and I believe they can be added to any section in question.

I have commuted and hiked through the area that has been surveyed, and it is unthinkable that this has gone this far. The expressway is no longer needed. It really seems to be part of a good old boy project list. This comment is supported by

the 133B yes table that is in the lobby that Coventry was never told about in advance.

Please pull the plug on this expressway. It is no longer needed.

Thank you.

MODERATOR ROSENBERG: Thank you, sir.

The next speaker is Janet Grace. She will be followed by David Grace.

JANET GRACE: Good evening. Thank you for the opportunity to speak on the battle of the Hop River.

My parents met, I am embarrassed to say, as employees of the Connecticut Highway Department. They married and moved to a better life on Bunker Hill. The Department of Highways changed its name, but nothing else changed there. Things changed for Dave and Dot. First of all, Dave got a new job. I was raised, gratefully, on the banks of Rufus Brook. I first drove on Route 6 and still do. There I learned about the environment, about endangered species, about pink lady slippers and princess pine. I learned about the environment, because there was no highway there. I learned, too, about politics, legislation and public speaking, because a highway

threatened my home.

I consider my home not the house that I was raised in, but the environment that surrounded it. I chose to live just a few miles away on the other side of that state forest that my family's property abuts to. I hope to retire on the banks of Rufus Brook and not across where you can see down a median of a highway, but perhaps in the forest.

But what I want to ask you tonight is be very careful in exploring what the purpose of this application really is. The original purpose was ceased, because of the impact of the Scituate Reservoir years ago when I first learned about legislation and public speaking. I want you to look very, very carefully at the analysis and analyze the needs and purpose for the highway. Things have changed on Route 6. Things have changed economically. Things have changed in terms of how people will commute in the future, and the statistics of the basis of highway travel are used to promote the highway being may not be accurate statistics.

If you can get past the purpose question, I ask you to look very closely at the

impact and decide what least really means.

Does least mean that nearly 30 homes already taken are a sunk cost like an economic cost? I want you to ask an entire generation of families who are denied the opportunity to grow up in a nuclear family, because half of their family's homes were taken. I want you to ask the Alzheimer's patient who was forced from his home and died a much quicker death, because he no longer knew where he was, and was very uncomfortable in his environment.

Does it mean that according to the DOT engineers for the highway that only two percent of the engineering hadn't been done, that the rest of the 98 percent of engineers will change the impacts altogether? Will it mean another 30 homes? Will it mean that what we have been presented tonight isn't what happens later?

Be very careful. Examine the facts, and I implore you to deny the permit.

Thank you.

(Applause.)

MODERATOR ROSENBERG: Thank you, ma'am.

Our next speaker is David Grace from Coventry. He will be followed by Ellen Panogrosso,

also of Coventry.

DAVID GRACE: This highway project was originally proposed to connect Hartford, Connecticut to Providence, Rhode Island. Rhode Island rejected any highway to do with environmental impacts. Any highway will only go potentially as far as 395 to the Danielson area. This highway will not serve any purpose of its original intent. Only – only to go to the Windham area of Route 6 and you will see that from Windham to Brooklyn, Connecticut has already been approved by approving the previously existing Route 6 corridor. The multilane highway development in that area is considered unlikely.

From Alternative 54 to the currently considered 133B, the Army Corps has consistently held that any highway route north of the Hop River would not be approved.

I respectfully ask your agency to deny a permit for the construction of Alternative 133B. Alternative 133B is similar to the previous proposals of Alternative 154 and Alternative 133A; and under similar routes, which your agency has denied permits for in the past, Alternative 133B is not the least environmentally damaging and

practicable alternative. There are at least two expressway alternatives that would be less environmentally damaging and practical for the Route 6 corridor.

Political forces and pressures have been brought by people who want benefits or improvements of transportation, but don't want their town or community to be burdened with such improvements. These same people don't seem to understand that routes similar to Alternative 133B have been denied a permit for construction in the past for sound reasons. These towns would include Andover, Bolton, Coventry - I mean Andover, Bolton and Columbia, the ABCs, were collectively gathered to try and put this highway through Coventry.

One of the tributaries to the Hop River is the Rufus Brook. As a young child and throughout my life, I have enjoyed the beautiful and virtually undisturbed section of the stream as it passes through the property that my family owns. Much of the respect and concern that I have developed for the environment was initiated from the time that I spent in this virtually undisturbed area of woods, water and nature. If Alternative 133B is allowed to

be built, it will destroy this area with a highway crossing and a stream in destroying an area of nature that my family has held dear for generations. No monetary figure could replace the special character of the stream or its value to the ecosystem known as the Hop River Basin.

The advocates have expressed they must make a decision based on what your agency has correctly indicated in the past. An expressway that is south of the Hop River Valley has been identified by your agency in the past as the only way to meet the least environmentally damaging practicable alternative requirement.

If an expressway is to be built at all, it should be done with the guidance of your agency, and previously communicated as potentially accessible. Alternative 133B does not meet this standard, and I urge you to go through your decisions in the past of previous similar proposals to deny a permit for Alternative 133B.

Thank you very much.

MODERATOR ROSENBERG: Thank you, sir.

Our next speaker is Ellen Panagrosso, P-A-N-A-G-R-O-S-S-O, for our stenographer.

ELLEN PANAGROSSO: You did very well.

MODERATOR ROSENBERG: Thank you. And she will be followed by Estelle Ouellette.

ESTELLE OUELLETTE: Ouellette.

MODERATOR ROSENBERG: Thank you. From Columbia.

ELLEN PANAGROSSO: Hi. My name is Ellen Panagrosso. I am a ten-year resident of Coventry, and I am here to express my opposition to the Route 6 expressway alternative known as 133B.

I received this public hearing packet from the Army Corps of Engineers, which detailed the Alternatives 133B, 133mod and 133/18-25mod. Now among these alternatives, 133B is shown to be the least environmentally damaging practicable alternative. What this document doesn't show, what it fails to point out, is that the actual least environmentally damaging practicable alternative isn't in here.

In the late 1980s, the Connecticut DOT sought a permit for an expressway alternative known as 54. That permit was denied, because it was too environmentally damaging as it followed an alignment north of the Hop River. The Connecticut DOT then

submitted an application for a permit for another alternative a few years ago. That was known as Alternative 133A. That permit request was withdrawn, and I believe that application would also have been denied for similar reasons. And now here we are again with the Connecticut DOT seeking a permit for expressway alternatives that would absolutely devastate the Hop River area, as well as the social environment and rural character of several towns.

Now, in reviewing this information, especially about 133B, I actually did read something that was brand-new to me and in this long-standing Route 6 expressway controversy. Apparently, the design of 133B has underpasses and overpasses for wildlife so that they won't have to cross the expressway. But I am just wondering if that is actually distinctable, or it may be part of that \$310 million price tag can be used to train wildlife to use those underpasses and overpasses.

(Laughter.)

ELLEN PANAGROSSO: The alleged purpose of this expressway alternative is to address safety and capacity issues, but I think that, too, is

questionable. When talking of capacity issues, is the DOT of Connecticut aware that the population of the Windham area has held steady or actually declined in recent years?

Do they realize that the long ago plan for a highway connecting Hartford and Providence is gone?

Where is this growing traffic volume going to come from?

And we are talking about safety issues. Is the Connecticut DOT aware there is no interchanges between Bolton and Columbia, so local residents will still be using the existing roadway?

And how is it possible for a new inaccessible expressway to make the deficient roadway that you currently travel any safer? Wouldn't we need to address the safety issues on the roadway that you actually travel.

I ask you, I urge you, to deny the permit for Alternative 133B.

Thank you.

MODERATOR ROSENBERG: Thank you, ma'am.

Next speaker —

(Applause.)

MODERATOR ROSENBERG: — is Estelle Ouellette, O-U-E-L-L-E-T-T-E, and she will be followed by Joseph Pandolfo.

ESTELLE OUELLETTE: Good evening. My name is Estelle Ouellette, and my family and I have been living on Edgerton Road in Columbia for the past 33 years.

133/18-25 modified would take our home, my mother's home of 43 years, and ten more homes just on that one road. Please note, I didn't say houses. I said homes. With people, with families, and not just the buildings.

A good part of Columbia's survival depends on the number of people in town, especially the businesses. Take that away, and you take away major tax revenues, which could economically destroy the whole town. This cannot be said of 133B. It's time to go by the books, so let's take note of the Clean Water Act where it does state that a practicable alternative will not create serious disruption to the community, its economy and the environment. Any route south of Hop River will disrupt Columbia's community by eliminating 44 to 53 existing homes and one to four businesses.

A greater number of families will be forced to leave than those affected by 133B, which takes 26 homes and no businesses. 133 modified and 133/18-25 modified will create a major social impact on Columbia. No one losing their home or business will relocate to another part of the town. New families will not want to move here, because they won't be able to afford it.

133B is the less disruptive choice. Any route south of Hop River will disrupt Columbia's economy, because of the tremendous loss of revenue. Columbia can't spare any businesses. There are so few of them in town.

If homes and businesses are lost because of highway construction, the remaining taxpayers will be left holding the bag. There is no such major disruption with 133B. Any route south of Hop River will disrupt Columbia's environment. Columbia's ecosystem would also be greatly disrupted.

How can you cross Hop River twice and not disrupt anything? 133 would not cause such a major disruption.

In conclusion, I want to say, that 133

modified and 133/18-25 modified are not practicable. Just study the facts. Selection of 133B makes sense, good common sense, which is something this country has lost. Let's find it, let's use it, let's make 133B work.

Thank you.

(Applause.)

MODERATOR ROSENBERG: Next speaker is Joseph Pandolfo, P-A-N-D-O-L-F-O, and he will be followed by Katherine Hutchinson.

JOSEPH PANDOLFO: I am not representing any group tonight. I am a commuter on Route 6. I live in Mansfield. I work in Bloomfield. I have worked there for the past - over ten-and-a-half years, and I have commuted daily on Route 6, at least one way, for those ten-and-a-half years.

Now, I guess I would like to make two sets of observations. The first has to do with the past few speakers. I think that if the Corps rejects the permit application for a 133B, consistent with past analysis and past decisions by the Corps, a lot of public support for the other highway alternatives will evaporate. And I think that is understandable that there is testimony here

from what I hesitate to call both sides, but I guess I'll use that term, expressing that any highway construction through any of these communities is going to be destructive.

The other set of observations I would like to make is just based on my experience commuting on Route 6, like I said, daily for the past ten-and-a-half years or so. The most often mentioned reasons for an expressway are volume and safety. And in the volume issue, I just observe that I don't see any real volume problems on Route 6 that I don't see elsewhere in my travels. In fact, there is a new expressway 291 that I travel every day as well, and I travel Route 218 through Bloomfield, and the volume on both of those roads is much worse than I see on Route 6.

In terms of safety, I guess the road itself lacks some basic safety features; and just to go into a little more detail about that, I count about 30 intersections on this corridor. So far ten of them have designated turn lanes. I count about 15 bad sight line areas, either due to curves or inclines. And out of those 15, only four have enough width to permit two cars within each lane to

pass each other in an emergency situation.

The shoulders along the whole corridor are very narrow, and of the four major curb cuts that seem to be high volume along this corridor, only one has a designated turn lane.

The safety improvements that have been made so far are items that would make a great difference, and I think a thorough upgrading of especially these problem areas is a very practicable alternative, would be the least destructive alternative and would solve a lot of the outstanding safety problems that we see today.

And let's see. I think that is about it. That is about it.

Thanks.

MODERATOR ROSENBERG: Thank you, sir.

Our next speaker is Katherine Hutchinson from Andover, and she will be followed by Roxanne Hosking, also from Andover.

KATHERINE HUTCHINSON: Hello. My name is Katherine Hutchinson, and I am from Andover.

You are well aware that the LEDPA determination carries with it practical alternative considerations. It is respectfully requested that

you consider the following impacts on the Town of Andover.

First, the direct financial loss to the Town of Andover and lost tax revenues. The assessed value of the homes and businesses taken by the two southerly routes is approximately \$1.5 million. These figures are just for the homes and business sites. It does not include the loss of the land that will also be taken on which there are no structures. It does not include the loss of additional tax revenues to the Town from motor vehicles and personal property taxes paid by those families who will no longer be living in Andover.

The assessed value of the homes taken by the northerly route is less than \$400,000.

Each year, the State of Connecticut spends millions of dollars to buy the development rights to farms so that farms will be forever preserved for the people of the State of Connecticut. Both of the southerly routes wipe out one of the last remaining working farms in the Town of Andover.

Both southerly routes destroy the only house of Victorian architecture in Andover, as well

as an 18th century farmhouse. These pieces of our history are irreplaceable.

One of Andover's most valuable assets is its families. The southerly route displaces more than three times the number of families than the northerly route. It is – these are just a few of the reasons why I urge you to support the approval of the State of Connecticut's application to build route – the Route 6 expressway Alternative 133B.

Thank you.

MODERATOR ROSENBERG: Thank you, ma'am.

Our next speaker, Roxanne Hosking from Andover. She will be followed by Brian Holmes representing the Connecticut Construction Industries Association.

ROXANNE HOSKING: Good evening. I find myself in a very unique position.

I grew up in Columbia. I married and am now living in Andover. And as a person who has grown up in the area, I learned to drive on Route 6. I can't say that of my nieces and nephews. They are not allowed on that highway.

My mother was injured on several accidents on Route 6 over the years. It's not the

highway's fault. It's the idiots who drive on the highways fault.

Personally, for myself, I grew up with listening about – listening to environmental impacts. I have listened to legislation. I have listened to an awful lot of individuals talking about all the things that are going on with regards to Route 6. I grew up with Route 6; however, Route 6 has not grown up with me.

I obtained my high school diploma at Windham High School, and I am the proud owner of a bachelor's of science degree at Eastern Connecticut State University in environmental science, which includes minors in GIS, geology and the like. I have an extensive background in the sciences of soil sciences and geology.

I know from where I speak. Environmentally speaking, nothing is ever going to improve this area. No matter what you do, no one is going to be happy with any decision, but something has to be done, and I am amazed that the one thing that no one here has ever spoken about is mass transportation.

Why? When that in itself is the most

environmentally correct thing to do for this area?
In assessing all of the Route 6 expressways and all the alternatives since the very first one that I saw at the age of seven in Columbia at the Town Hall, I am now 44. So that tells you how long this has been going on.

I'm amazed that, unfortunately for the Town of Columbia, for the Town of Coventry, for the Town of Andover, these are the only towns that seems to be included in any of the decisions. But what about Lebanon? What about Willimantic? What about the Windhams? What about the outside areas that also are concerned with the area and the highways?

It upsets me to think that these people are also being taken under consideration. Yes, it doesn't impact them directly as their homes are being taken, but employment wise, it's just - it's upsetting me that they are not included in any of this at all.

Thank you.

MODERATOR ROSENBERG: Thank you.

Our next speaker is Brian Holmes, and he will be followed by Nancy Nelson of Andover.

BRIAN HOLMES: My name is Brian Holmes.

I am the director of regulatory affairs for the Connecticut Construction Industries Association.

The word on the street is that in New England, both the Corps division and the EPA region operate by a set of unwritten rules that don't apply to the rest of the country.

While Michigan can permit an airport with 400 acres of impacts, including one over 100 acres, with no EPA veto; Colorado gets a permit with 70 acres for Stapleton Airport, and now for the other new airport with over 100 acres with no veto. Raleigh/Durham and North Carolina gets a permit with 75 acres for a highway with no veto. The word is that you can't get a permit for a highway project, or any other project in New England, if it has more than about 13 acres of impacts.

In fact, the only time that the Corps indicated it would issue a permit for a 40-acre impact, EPA vetoed it. That was New Hampshire.

What's going on here? Why is New England different?

Second, EPA has announced its intention to veto a permit for 133B. The analysis is based on unfragmented forest blocks. These are either upland

impacts or a cipher through what EPA sees as uncontrolled and unmanaged growth, which Congress, in the Clean Water Act, gave the states to control. Colonel, your jurisdiction is over impacts from discharges of dredged or fill material into waters of the US.

Third, LEDPA is a misnomer. Everyone, including the Corps, leaves off the last, but very important bit of language, so long as it does not have other significant harmful environmental effects. Included in these effects are effects on human beings and their habitat.

These three issues should be resolved before you decide this application. The different standard for New England, the use of upland or improper land use based impact considerations, and finally, putting human impacts back into the alternatives of the analysis. If you do that, you will find that Alternative 133B is the superior alternative, based on the quantity and quality of the wetlands being impacted, and based on the human impacts.

Thank you.

MODERATOR ROSENBERG: Thank you, sir.

(Applause.)

MODERATOR ROSENBERG: Our next speaker will be Nancy Nelson. Following Ms. Nelson, our stenographer needs to change tapes, and we will take a break.

Ms. Nelson.

FEMALE VOICE: She has already spoken.

MODERATOR ROSENBERG: Carolyn Schlessler from Columbia.

FEMALE VOICE: She has already spoken.

MODERATOR ROSENBERG: All right. One more. Teresa Hickson from Andover.

Ladies and gentlemen, we need to change the tape with the stenographer. We will take a 15-minute recess and reconvene at 9:00.

Thank you.

(There was a short break taken.)

MODERATOR ROSENBERG: Ladies and gentlemen, I had called a name or two prior to the break. I'm going to recall those individuals to see if they have returned.

Carolyn Schlessler from Columbia.

Leigh Ann Hutchinson.

David Torstenson.

Ann Rhinelanders from Andover.

ANN RHINELANDER: I'm here.

MODERATOR ROSENBERG: Ann will be followed by Lyndon W-I-L-M-O-T, from Coventry.

LYNDON WILMOT: Lyndon Wilmot.

ANN RHINELANDER: I am Ann Rhinelanders from Andover. I have petitioned this against - I'm sorry - to support permitting of 133B. I have three specific interests in that.

One is preservation; one is equity, in terms of impact on all the towns involved; and one is balanced responsible administration of very well conceived legislation, rather than governed by zealotry and bias.

My exposure to this was most intense when I had the privilege of a - one of 29 seats on the Route 6 Advisory Committee representing agriculture, heritage and preservation based on economic development, none of which had been addressed before that.

The exposure to the complexity and the longevity of the issues - I won't say inspired - drove me to - to try to identify some measurable handles on some of what was happening. And I

started drafting a piece on that and finally finished it and signed it three years later. Most of these issues still hold. Out of the 12 issues, one is legislative. These are outlined. I mean, they are elaborated on and have been submitted. But they include legislative measures, legal precedents for overturning inappropriate denials, the difference between science and theory, civility. These measures are either quantitative or qualitative, but they can be assessed objectively. Statistical, democratic process, ethical, who benefits, who losses, motivation, vision, roles and behavior, environmental issues, and what should be.

Of the 12 areas that are in here, one has changed since I started putting this together, and that is No. 12, because it focused on the need for an express connection, rather than an expressway, and that meant to adapt to no more than two lanes in one direction and two lanes in the other, in a way there that was as creative as the Route 71 and Glenwood Canyon in Colorado. The creativity was extraordinary.

The change is that in the interim, the DOT has come up with an extraordinary creative,

environmentally sensitive alternate that I believe should be permitted without any further adieu.

Thank you very much.

MODERATOR ROSENBERG: Thank you.

The next speaker, Lyndon Wilmot, and he will be followed by Gene, M-A-R-C-H-A-N-D.

LYNDON WILMOT: Thank you.

That's Lyndon Wilmot. I am a Coventry resident currently temporarily living on Woodbridge Road for the last 50 years or something.

I have half my bags packed, and depending on which color comes on the light whether I go or not. I welcome everyone here to this beautiful highway party. Colonel, it's too bad you have to be here, but unfortunately we are here to express our feelings tonight.

Now, I oppose all northern routes, 133B, and any other name you want to give it in the future. Okay. So I want to take all the rest of the names off the table. They are gone. I hold them all.

I have been coming to meetings - well, I made a career out of it actually, and I would like to think that it's going to be over some day, but I

want to tell you that we always are here for safety, but we are not here for safety tonight. Safety is gone.

You want to know where it went? Well, it — Route 6 got so safe that we could afford to take out the improvements that we put in in the Town of Bolton, meaning the rumble strips, because 20 people said, I don't like them. So apparently all the sirens, all the ambulances, all the dead people mean nothing, because we must have silence out there. And they are not going to be happy until all the traffic gets off the road, apparently.

I was applauded when I read that in the paper. I said, you got to be kidding me. Now they are going to pay to take them out. We ought to have them from one end to the other nonstop. That is what we ought to do.

Highway — I guess Coventry is really the forgotten land. Andover seems to forgot how they came to be. We were one of the three towns that voted to give them property so that they could create a town years ago. I would like to recount those votes somehow.

(Laughter.)

LYNDON WILMOT: I think there are some issues here. And by the way, just let me — there is another flyer going around here that says, cut them off at the pass. This has to do with a southern route before you get to the notch of peeling off of 384 early. It makes a lot of sense. It really makes a lot of sense. And the only thing I have ever heard in all these years was, Can't do it. I don't know if somebody looked into it during coffee break, I guess, or something and said, can't do it. Well, I think we are going to have to look at that really seriously if we really want to do something here with the highway. But Route 6 is so safe that we can pull out the improvements that we have put in, and we certainly don't need anything.

You know, there is not that many people in Hartford that are going to Willimantic to see those frogs. I can tell you that right now. You know, they built a new bridge, and they think they're all fancy, put the frogs up there so everybody would come and look at them, but I don't think we need the highway just for that particular point. It is important, though, this traffic light here tonight. This is important. You out to get a

punch of them and put them down on Route 6.

You see how 44 backs up in the morning with all the cars trying to get down through Bolton, because of the traffic light? Well, that is what we need to slow them down on Route 6 is a few more traffic lights. And I think the lights here represent red, you are on the line; green, you are gone; yellow, you're next - you are the next group. It has been that way for 38 years.

By the way, I must commend you. You have done a wonderful job the last 35 years, your organization. Don't give up. Don't give up. Hang tough.

MODERATOR ROSENBERG: Thank you, sir.

Our next speaker is Gene Marchand from Coventry, and he will be followed by Dave Rose, also from Coventry.

GENE MARCHAND: Good evening. I'm here to speak tonight to strongly oppose the application of the Connecticut Department of Transportation to construct a Route 6 expressway, Alternative 133B.

The route chosen by DOT would cut a wide swath through a most beautiful and environmentally sensitive section is of the Town of Coventry,

including the Nathan Hale State Forest. I have followed the Route 6 debate for many years and find it incredible that the DOT is essentially submitting the same route design that has been rejected for many years as environmentally unacceptable. The design changes made to the original plan are insignificant.

Beyond the environmental concerns are the permanent damage to the character of the Town of Coventry. I question the wisdom of the Connecticut DOT in building a 13-mile stretch of highway that will essentially dead end in North Windham all for the cost of \$310 million. The existing Route 6 has the same traffic volume as similar rural roads in Connecticut with an accident rate that is below the state average.

The populations in the Windham area and Willimantic area have remained the same or declined since 1990, further questioning the need for such a project.

Route 6 from Bolton to Willimantic is a busy road, and it definitely needs improvements and upgrades. If an expressway was built, Route 6 would be less busy, but would still contain dangerous

sections. Upgrades and improvements are needed, not an expressway.

Connecticut is a beautiful state with a delicate and diminishing rural character. I believe we need to be planful and careful in our future development, especially in Eastern and Northwestern Connecticut. If the DOT policy is to build expressways paralleling all of our busy state rural roads, I fear that Connecticut will soon become a large highway interchange between Boston and New York.

I urge you to reject this request for 133B.

Thank you.

MODERATOR ROSENBERG: Thank you, sir.

(Applause.)

MODERATOR ROSENBERG: Our next speaker is David Rose from Coventry. He will be followed by Jean Herrman, also from Coventry.

Mr. Rose.

MODERATOR ROSENBERG: Jean Herrman. And Ms. Herrman will be followed by Robert Blanchard from Coventry — Blanchard.

JEAN HERRMAN: Good evening. I moved to

this area two years ago and heard horror stories of Suicide Six. I have used Route 6 daily since I moved here to commute to the Hartford area and to Brooklyn, Connecticut. In my opinion, as an experienced traveler of this corridor, an expressway is not required for volume or safety reasons. All the alternatives proposed by the Connecticut Department of Transportation emphasize minimal environmental and human impact, but none of the alternatives are without substantial human impact and extensive environmental impact.

All roads use a similar western portion that severely impacts the Skungamaug River Valley and its wetlands, an area that for some unimaginable reason has taken on a lesser significance than that at the Hop River.

In discussing the history of this Route 6 alternative proposal with my neighbors - I currently live on South Street - I have come to learn that many have lost homes and face losing additional property as well. Yet many are not here tonight, because they have grown weary of the battle with the Connecticut Department of Transportation. It is time to end the 35 years of political

terrorism caused by this unnecessary highway to nowhere.

As we have heard tonight, upgrades of Route 6 are necessary and achievable. Such as increased shoulder space, turning lanes, traffic lights and increased patrolling to decrease the aggressive driving behaviors that are the primary cause of accidents along Route 6.

Let me end by stating that I moved here from California, land of the expressways, and land of no sense of community. This part of Connecticut is a rare place, a place with a long-standing sense of community that is threatened by this expressway project. None of the towns represented here tonight will gain from this project. It will only continue to divide us and destroy the semirural communities that we all currently enjoy.

Thank you.

MODERATOR ROSENBERG: Thank you.

(Applause.)

MODERATOR ROSENBERG: Our next speaker is Robert Blanchard from Coventry, and he will be followed by Sylvain DeGuise.

BOB BLANCHARD: My name is Bob

Blanchard. I'm speaking tonight on behalf of my wife Tracy, and daughter Meghan.

We are Coventry residents that have lived in Coventry for five years. I grew up in Windsor. A lot of folks don't picture Windsor as a rural country area, but where I lived and grew up with my family, it was very rural. A lot of nature, a lot of fields, a lot of woods. We learned a lot from my father about nature and respect for environment.

However, during my teenage years, a highway came into our neighborhood, 291. It took away a lot of that rural characteristics that we lived with. Now that I've gotten married, my wife and I have decided to move out to the country, Coventry, have a home in Coventry, bring up a family in Coventry. Our little daughter, Meghan, loves to run through the yard, through the woods, see the deer, see the turkeys. My father calls it God's country, and that is what it really is. It is God's country. We love seeing the nature.

I think I'm suffering from highway anxiety right now. I look up above with my daughter, and I see military helicopters. My

daughter says, helicopter, and I need to explain to her what those helicopters are for. \$310 million in taxpayer money going to a highway that just doesn't make sense to me. It not only will divide Coventry into two, but the environmental damage will be irreparable. 25 - 24 more homes will be taken, and that is the good part. Even more homes will be left right next to the highway.

When tackling any problem, I have learned in business we need to find the root cause. The root cause of this is not to build a highway. The root cause is to make Route 6 better. We seem to be losing sight of that. Safety issues need to be addressed on Route 6. Left-hand turn lanes are great. I love going into those left-hand turn lanes. I feel safe.

The rumble strips, as Lyndon mentioned, were also great. It saved my life one night when a car was coming at me, hit the rumble strip, swerved back on their side of the road. It's too bad the DOT paved those over last month. We need to slow people down. We need to have police patrols more on Route 6. When the media is there, the police are there. When the media lays off, the police lay off.

I strongly urge you to look at everything involved here. Let's not build a highway and create more problems, but please deny the permit for 133B and fix the problems with Route 6.

Thank you, sir.

MODERATOR ROSENBERG: Our next speaker, Sylvain DeGuise, followed by Bill O'Neil.

SYLVAIN DeGUISE: Good evening. My name is Sylvain DeGuise. I am assistant professor at University of Connecticut, and I came here two-and-a-half years ago and chose to live in Coventry. I have a few comments.

Considering the environmental impact of building an expressway in a peaceful rural environment, and it doesn't seem to have been a very loudly expressed area, but people chose two years ago, myself, or generations ago, to live in a peaceful rural environment, and they have a choice to move into more highway-friendly suburban areas. And several like me chose the rural environment, probably for a reason. And by the way, I also moved here from California where the suburban sprawl for all the expressways results in endless strip malls, and that is the reason I left, and that is not what

I want to see here.

Considering that as is well known in environmental sciences, lesser impact does not mean no impact, nor acceptable impact. Considering that as plans were drafted this cast and redrafted for 30 or 35 years, Route 6 handled the traffic and was improved, considering that controlling the traffic on Route 6 might be a much more reasonable option than diverting unreasonable drivers to an expressway. Hitting a deer at 80 miles an hour might be just more damaging than hitting a deer at 50 miles an hour.

Concerning all those points, I question the need for and oppose the construction of an expressway between Bolton and Windham.

Furthermore, if only a fraction of efforts and money that were spent in planning an expressway that no one wants have been spent improving Route 6, all of us might be home and happy tonight.

Thank you.

MODERATOR ROSENBERG: Thank you, sir.

Our next speaker Bill O'Neil from Manchester.

MALE VOICE: I think he is gone.

MODERATOR ROSENBERG: Linda Davidson,
Columbia. Ms. Davidson will be followed by Frank —

FRANK LALASHUIS: Lalashuis.

MODERATOR ROSENBERG: Lalashuis, thank
you.

LINDA DAVIDSON: Hi. My name is Linda
Davidson, and my husband and I moved from Manchester
to Columbia two-and-a-half years ago. We are
newcomers, okay, but we hope to retire there. It's
a great place to live.

I have seen a lot of construction. I
have seen some improvements, some traffic lights and
a lot of state troopers. But I will say that today
twice coming down Route 87 to the new light that
they put in, I waited, luckily, twice, because twice
someone went through the red light. So I'm not so
sure about these new improvements. I'm really
having a hard time with them.

People are still in a hurry. There is
too many cars. It's a single lane road, and a lot
of people who have their minds elsewhere. It's not
on the road. Route 6 is at times intoxicating. The
leaves, the lull of the traffic, the eagles flying

overhead, okay, but it's still not working. It's not working at all. Everybody is in a hurry. They can't wait for the car up ahead to turn off, somehow believing that if they get there a minute earlier their life will be better.

I have seen way too many almosts on Route 6 in just two-and-a-half years. And when we thought about moving, Route 6 was a real deterrent. It was a pretty scary thing for me. That is the scariest part of my day every day, and I go to work, and I'm there at six o'clock in the morning. So I'm not really hitting a lot of the traffic, but there is a lot of tractor trailer trucks, and people at that hour, they are flying down the road; and at three o'clock when I am on my way home, it's just as bad.

It has — something has to be done. I mean, some day I'm going to lose a neighbor; I'm going to lose a friend, and I really don't want to see that happen. If 133B is the alternative, it's going to impact the environment the least, and we got to do something. I don't want to lose a good neighbor or a friend. And I'm scared. I really am. Route 6 is horrible, and these improvements have not

made it any better. I don't see that.

Thank you.

MODERATOR ROSENBERG: Thank you.

Mr. Lalashuis will speak next, and he will be followed by Neil McKeever.

Sir, could you spell your name for the stenographer?

FRANK LALASHUIS: Lalashuis,
L-A-L-A-S-H-U-I-S.

MODERATOR ROSENBERG: Thank you, sir.

FRANK LALASHUIS: My name is Frank Lalashuis. I am from Andover.

Route 6 is not safe. Route 6 will never be safe. We need some type of highway. All the improvements that have been made on Route 6 only give the careless driver more room for error. I live on Route 6. I see what you people don't see. I see the crashes. I see the blood. I see Life Star. This is a continuously — a continuous thing. Because of driver error, I put a second driveway. I put in a second driveway. Okay. My wife and my four children sometimes drive by both those driveways in fear of getting hit from behind. Local people understand the problem that we all have, all

our communities have. Okay. The commuter from Hartford to Windham does not care, not one bit.

I also drive a truck. Sometimes on Route 6, more upgrades or an expansion of Route 6 is just going to turn this road into Supersuicide six. I stand behind the choice of the DOT. I am in total favor of 133B.

Thank you.

MODERATOR ROSENBERG: Thank you, sir.

Our next speaker is Neil McKeever, and Neil will be followed by Ed Bosk of Andover.

NEIL MCKEEVER: Good evening. I would like to first preface my remarks by saying, I prefer to have no expressway at all, but realistically, I probably accept there is going to be something. So I would just like to say that the current proposed Route 6 expressway, 133 and 133/18-25 as it impacts on the Town of Columbia is totally unacceptable. It demonstrates that the US EPA and Army Corps of Engineers do not care about people, or that they lack the knowledge to design an expressway that allows me in an environment to live in concert.

In any event, any eventually-settled-upon expressway will probably end

up being challenged in some court. Do you think that if a court hears your argument to cause widespread devastation to people in towns in this region for the benefit of trees and frogs, do you think that court will say it's okay to proceed with your plan?

Conversely, do you think that if a court hears that you can construct an equally acceptable expressway, 133B, on mostly undeveloped land with minimal impact to towns in the region, their residents, the general population and the environment that they – do you think the court might say, okay, proceed with that plan?

If you insist in pursuing an expressway, I would urge you then to accept 133B. I would also urge you to repetition the EPA and to ask them to give you a deviation, certainly for reasons of hardship in this particular area.

This expressway, Route 6, 133B, could be constructed with minimal moving and shoulders, limited cutting of trees, numerous crossings for wildlife, a bird sanctuary, protected wildlife areas and, if necessary, a man-made tributary or water reservoir.

I want to thank you very much for taking your time.

MODERATOR ROSENBERG: Thank you, sir.

NEIL MCKEEVER: Good night.

MODERATOR ROSENBERG: Next speaker, Ed Bosk, from Andover. He will be followed by Chris Thorkelson from Manchester Center.

Sir.

ED BOSK: Hi. Thank you for being here tonight. My name is Ed Bosk. I'm from Andover, Connecticut. I am not directly affected by any of the alignments, but I do support 133B. I am here to ask the federal agencies tonight to approve 133B, and I hope that you can use your expertise to help us build an environmentally-sound highway; and also your authority to help get compensation for any damages that might be done by this highway.

Thank you.

MODERATOR ROSENBERG: Thank you, sir.

The next speaker, Chris Thorkelson.

CHRIS THORKELSON: Thorkelson.
Mansfield Center.

MODERATOR ROSENBERG: Mansfield Center, followed by David Grace, Jr. from Coventry.

CHRIS THORKEKELSON: I am here as the coordinator of the Transit Alliance of Eastern Connecticut. I am also a member of the Mansfield Town Council, but I am not speaking in that role. I was a member of the Route 6 Citizens Advisory Committee convened by the Department of Transportation in the early '90s to examine this problem.

We had a workshop to examine some of the transit solutions that might assist in the capacity issues here, some of the cars and stuff off the road. It was a very good workshop. We came up with about eight recommendations, seven of which the Connecticut Department of Transportation rejected. The last one they accepted enthusiastically throughout the simple notion to sell blocks of 10 or 20 tickets to commuters, which they don't currently do that. They accepted that, but they never implemented it in the ensuing eight years.

The Connecticut Department of Transportation is really not a transportation agency. It's still really a highway agency, it seems to me. Why couldn't they come up with something as simple as that in all that time?

Why would they keep coming back with this same expressway proposal again and again and again, 35 years of this same. The times have changed; the situation is different; and yet we are hauled down here once again to speak on this issue.

It reminds me of you may have seen Fantasia, the Sorcerer's Apprentice, where Mickey casts a spell on the brooms, and they start hauling the water from the well, and he takes a nap while they're hauling away. He wakes up and he finds himself awash in the flooding waters everywhere. I think that the government set up a transportation agency to build roads a long time ago and went to sleep, and here they are still trying to build roads that are no longer appropriate and are no longer needed, and we are finding ourselves awash in concrete everywhere.

The — there is no justification for this road that I can see. There is no safety issues that have not pretty well already been addressed. It's not a capacity issue. Route 44 has more cars. And as far as economic development, this is the wrong time. That is what I would say. It is not to meet an existing need for capacity. In fact, a

highway will create more demand, more automobiles, more pollution and more of the kind of bad development and environmental degradation that we have seen.

Thank you.

MODERATOR ROSENBERG: Thank you, sir.

Next speaker, David Grace, Jr. from Coventry.

FEMALE VOICE: He spoke earlier.

MODERATOR ROSENBERG: George Kitchin from Andover. Mr. Kitchen will be followed by Richard Brand from Coventry.

GEORGE KITCHIN: George Kitchin, that is I-N, not E-N, from Andover.

Colonel, I sympathize with you and the hours you have to sit through these things.

Andover is on record in favor of the highway, but that is because the majority of the population lives on the south side of Route 6. The sentiment is somewhat different on the north side. Well, I believe that the people who want the highway should have the highway. Of course, when it was proposed that the highway be built south of Route 6, the opinion instantly changed, and it became

apparently only cared about the safety of Route 6, if the highway is still north of Route 6.

Now, frankly, I don't really much care about a few acres of wetlands, and I am not directly affected by the highway, but I oppose building the highway anywhere at all. And I speak as a salesman who travels pretty safe, so I depend on good roads. I simply don't have a problem with having to travel a few miles at 50 miles an hour instead of 65, and of course, 65 becomes 80.

Route 6 carries heavy traffic for an hour or so in the morning and again in the evening. To spend such a vast sum of money to alleviate a few hours of heavy traffic, while — which at worst, normally moves steadily at about 40 to 45 miles an hour, would be a tremendous waste.

Now, let's compare Route 6 with Route 7 in — from Danbury to Wilton. Route 7 is, if anything, narrower than Route 6. It's twistier. It's many miles longer. It carries a volume of traffic that makes Route 6 look like a country lane. Yet when someone hears of serious accidents on Route 7, because the traffic is always heavy, no one has the opportunity to speed or pass. No one has

the opportunity to be aggressive or stupid.

And that brings me to my most important point. Route 6 will be more dangerous, not less, if the expressway is built. Serious accidents don't happen on Route 6 when the traffic is heavy, but when it is light. When traffic is light, people speed and pass while paying less attention. In short, if you wish to reduce the number of deaths per year, continue to modernize and improve the current Route 6. If you wish accidents and deaths to increase, then build the expressway anywhere you wish.

Thank you.

MODERATOR ROSENBERG: Thank you, sir.

(Applause.)

MODERATOR ROSENBERG: Our next speaker, Richard Brand from Coventry. He will be followed by Steven Walleth, also from Coventry.

RICHARD BRAND: Hi. My name is Richard Brand. I have been a resident of Coventry for over 46 years. I have been listening to some of these arguments for probably 35 years, or maybe even more.

First of all, I would like to thank you for letting us speak tonight. I do object to the

highway. I would like to see upgrades to Route 6, some of the turning lanes; maybe some corners straightened out; maybe some other new designs that can implement easier travel on the highway.

You know, I do have concerns of the environmental impact of the existing proposed Route 133, you know, substantial impact environmentally, the habitat, the animals. So, you know, I just would like to get my words in that I do object to the highway and would like to see upgrades of Route 6.

Thank you.

MODERATOR ROSENBERG: Thank you, sir.

The next speaker is Steven WalleTT from Coventry. He will followed by Richard Sherman from — representing Citizens for a Sensible Six.

STEVEN WALLETT: I'm Steven WalleTT from Coventry. I don't represent anyone, other than myself.

I would like to start by saying that I have learned a couple of things this evening. First, I think in the last 35 years, all the Department of Transportation has done is managed to polarize these three towns. I think the

overwhelming majority of people here don't want an expressway, and that they are being forced to accept an alternative one or the other that which doesn't impact them the most.

The other thing I thought was kind of funny was that the one person that was probably the strongest proponent of any of the alternatives was a gentleman representing the Connecticut Construction Industries Association. It sounds like a lobbyist to me. I think he, and he who he represents, will benefit the most from any alternative highway.

Let's see. I have a unique career right now. I live in Coventry, but I travel to New York every week, New York City, and I can't impart to you people enough on how minimal the traffic is on Route 6. I get on Route 6 every Monday and travel 6, compared to a number of highways that I travel on my way to New York, particularly the Merritt Parkway, where I sit in traffic for two hours to travel two or three miles. You guys don't appreciate what slowing down to 35 miles an hour means.

I'm going to hurry up here.

Oh. What I think is important for

people to understand, one of the things, is that I'm reading through this inch of paper that I received on my way in today, and I noticed that the Department of Transportation mentions that they are not proposing a highway from Hartford to Providence. Well, this is absurd. Of course they are. They are just doing it piecemeal, because that way, they only polarize one or two towns at a time. Now I know you guys are going to argue. I see people shaking their heads that this isn't the case, but believe me, it is.

By conquering this highway two or three miles at a time, they don't get everyone together in Eastern Connecticut. And the reason that all of you live in Eastern Connecticut, by the way, is that because it is because you have clean air, clean water, clean soil, good schools, safe environments. You build any expressway, and this is going to continue the expressway problems. You are going to lose your clean environment, and you are going to lose your safe neighborhoods and your good schools. All right. Columbia is going to become Bristol. No offense to Bristol, but Columbia is a quaint Eastern Connecticut town.

Let's see. I invite everyone to look at the map of Connecticut that is in the lobby there with all the other poster boards to see that, you know, they have already constructed these three pieces of the expressway. One is in Killingly. It's five miles long. It starts nowhere and ends nowhere. And I apologize for going on, but I also need to address the Army Corps.

MODERATOR ROSENBERG: Sorry. Your time is up. Thank you.

STEVEN WALLETT: Please everyone take a look at the map. You'll see that the Department of Transportation has an agenda, and that is to build a highway from Hartford to Providence.

MODERATOR ROSENBERG: Thank you, sir.

STEVEN WALLETT: Clearly, none of you believe that.

MODERATOR ROSENBERG: All right. Thank you, sir. Thank you very much.

Our next speaker is Richard Sherman representing Citizens for a Sensible Six, and he will be followed by Dot Davis — Dot Davis from Columbia.

Sir.

RICHARD SHERMAN: Thank you very much.

As I said, my name is Richard Sherman representing Citizens for a Sensible Six, and members in the towns of Coventry, Andover, Columbia, Windham and Mansfield. We are primarily responsible for putting together a petition several years back in response to an earlier DOT north of the Hop River application that had over 2,000 signatures on it.

I'm here to basically tell you that our organization opposes the granting of a 404 permit to Alternate 133B, and the reason we do that is that essentially this application is not materially different than many of the others that you have submitted north of the Hop River, including the more recent one that it actually withdrew from consideration before the Army had an opportunity or a chance to act. Very simply, the crucial weakness in their application is that it segments the Hop River headwaters and Bear Swamp so the Clean Water Act is not allowed.

At this point, I would also like to associate the Citizens for a Sensible Six with the comments made Doctor Thorson this afternoon speaking

on behalf of Coventry where he called into question the data that was in the application regarding delineation of wetlands; and unfortunately for us, this has a very reminiscent ring to it. And, Colonel, I was in a meeting earlier in the year where you admonished many of us not to bash DOT, and I really have no intention of bashing them as an agency; however, I think it's totally legitimate to look at the history of some of their behaviors, some of which I would like to highlight right here.

For years, we asked DOT to conduct and execute road improvements to Route 6. They only did that several years ago after intense political pressure was brought by many members of the legislature upon them.

Secondly, a number of years ago, after one of their earlier applications, they refused to do an actual traffic count on Route 6. We, the citizens, went out, got the equipment ourselves and did it. We found that essentially four years into their projection, the projections were materially off. I mean in 1994, they were below the 1990 existing traffic data.

Third of all, and more contemporarily,

we have to wonder why, having finally been displayed the gratuities for the road improvements, that they failed to release the safety data regarding the effect of the improvements. In fact, my understanding is that the Town of Coventry has an FOI complaint against DOT.

In essence, what I am arguing is that I believe, and we believe, that the solution to the Route 6 corridor problem is right before our eyes. We are in the process of solving it; we are in the process of eliminating deaths; and we certainly will have a facility that will meet project purpose and need. For these reasons, and because of the dictates of the 404 permit, we urge you to deny them a permit for this alternative.

Thank you very much.

MODERATOR ROSENBERG: Thank you, sir.

(Applause.)

MODERATOR ROSENBERG: Next speaker, Dot Davis of Columbia, will be followed by Doctor Edward Sarisley.

EDWARD SARISLEY: Sarisley.

MODERATOR ROSENBERG: Thank you, sir.

DOT DAVIS: Good evening. My name is

Dot Davis, 49-year resident of Columbia, and I have driven Route 6, or Suicide 6, for many, many years to Hartford and Windsor for employment. I would like to make an opening statement and be very brief.

Although there have been some public announcements of this hearing, after almost 35 years of false starts, I really feel the current routes and detailed informational maps should have been mailed to each and every household in all the affected towns.

Many people here tonight have voiced opinions about property and environmental impacts, so I will direct my comments about myself personally. I am a casualty of Route 6, an accident which resulted in the highway being closed for many hours and inconvenience to many at best. I was one of the lucky ones, because I'm here to speak tonight. I am alive, although I had to undergo months of physical therapy and pain medication, and still suffer some ill effects.

I wish Route 6 could be improved enough to solve all the safety problems that now exist, but I feel it's just not possible to do so enough to accommodate tractor trailers and all the other heavy

commercial use.

As a footnote, I am an active member of the Appalachian Mountain Club. And in January of 2001, there will be a new proposal to add – to raise funds in the millions to promote new trails – to build new trails and a new hut system to relieve the volume of hikers.

And I close with this. Although I do not like superhighways, I think we need to think about and do the same thing. I don't like to take anyone's homes, businesses, or the animals, but I feel we need a solution, and the least offensive one at this time we have been presented with is 133B, and we need it yesterday.

Thank you.

MODERATOR ROSENBERG: Thank you, ma'am.

(Applause.)

MODERATOR ROSENBERG: Our next speaker, Doctor Sarisley, will be followed by Joyce Fox from Columbia.

DOCTOR SARISLEY: Good evening, Colonel, Ms. Lee.

I am a professional of civil engineering technology. I have studied this for 30 years, since

the early '70s when I was a civil engineering student at UConn. There are many things I can say tonight, and I want to try to get a couple points in.

There are well-meaning people in here, a lot of meaningful people that support the environment, support mass transportation. I do, also. I dreamed of the day I would try to educate people. I have to educate my students. I would also like to have some responsibility to educate the public. And I dream of the day that we can model the European system of both a balanced highway system and a mass transportation system. And notice our mass transportation supporters have just left the room. I hope it's not because I was up to speak. My last two vacations were on Amtrak with my family.

I live in my town center of Andover. I hope and I teach my children some day, they will be able to take mass transit to Hartford, because we live within walking distance to the former railroad station.

That being said, I was with the Army Corps when they were investigating no highway at

all, and I was with the EPA when they were saying no highway at all. Let's exist - let's expand on the highway, and the only thing I disagreed with you on was that if you decided to go that route, you have to rebuild the railroad that exists on the same corridor, because we have to get the trucks and the freight off the road. However, things have changed.

The Army Corps now has professionally decided it does not meet the purpose and need. We are going to go ahead and continue to build and finish our highway system, and hopefully someday we will finish the mass transportation system also.

The rest of my comments tonight are based on the assumption that you are correct in your most recent decision that a highway is needed. If a highway is needed, I would like to point out to the Colonel, who I assume has read the Environmental Impact Statement, that many people tonight have talked about social economic impact, but no one has referred to map ES-2, which is cohesion maps. Many hard thousands of man hour labor has gone into making that map. It was submitted to Ms. Christine Godfrey up in Waltham, and it is the reason why we do not have totally southern alignments.

Shame on them. Shame on Coventry officials in the Journal Inquirer quoting, saying that – and Mike Williams also tonight, an electrical engineer, contending that previous routes deeper into Andover were taken off the table due to political pressure. That is not the reason. They were in error. They need to be educated. They were taken off the table, because of their social economic impacts. Okay. Shame on the EPA. Here we go again.

Apparently, this afternoon, EPA testified we are willing to explore express options that run south of the existing Route 6, or which run north or partially south. Shame on them. They do not have the professional engineering experience to know what social, economic and LEDPA practicability really means.

So please, Colonel, you must approve, if you approve a highway, it has to be one of these, or close to one of these alignments that currently exists. It has been 30 years. It's time to poop or get off the pot.

Thank you.

(Applause.)

MODERATOR ROSENBERG: Thank you, sir.

Our next speaker, Joyce Fox from
Columbia.

JOYCE FOX: Good evening. As you said,
I am Joyce Fox from Columbia. I was born a few
years ago in Columbia and have been struggling right
along Route 6 with my family for too many years.

One of the reasons I thought of speaking
this evening is that there is a great and important
sector of our society that is unable to be here this
evening, and those people are the actual victims who
have been killed on Route 6. And I might say to
some of our neighboring communities, the Andover and
Columbia ambulances go a mile a minute. The siren
goes off too often. When one person dies on
Route 6, it's a lot more people who are affected.
It's parents, children, siblings, aunts, uncles,
grandparents. So when I see people say, oh, there
has only been 11 people killed in the last ten
years, that has expedientially affected so many
other people.

Number two, I would question as I listen
to everybody in the gathering here this evening, how
many of us are grateful from this area to get on 291

and head for Bradley Airport when we are dropping off passengers or picking them up. It makes sense to have a safe highway. And we need a new one, and we need it now. And, obviously, I'm very much in favor of 133B; I'm flattered everybody is here. I would like to do away with the EPA. I am definitely an anarchist. That is why we have two ends of the highway built, and the middle has not been built. We filled in lakes. We have blown up all these mountains, but now the easy part is left undone.

And I would like to say personally to the Colonel, welcome. I haven't met you before, but I would love to write a wonderful story about you becoming a hero when you build this road.

Good luck.

(Applause.)

MODERATOR ROSENBERG: Thank you, ma'am.

Ms. Fox was our last signed up speaker.

Is there anybody in the room that has not spoken but has -- has filled out a card and not indicated the desire to speak, but would like to at this time?

(No response.)

MODERATOR ROSENBERG: Sir.

COLONEL OSTERNDORF: For the remainder of you that have stuck the course here, I do have a few comments, and just basically to thank you for providing your inputs. They are valuable. In many cases, certainly the – it is very apparent to us how heartfelt they are as well. And so, again, we appreciate that. They have been thoughtful, and we will now go ahead and take them, make them part of the record and use them to conduct our analysis.

As said and previously stated, the record will remain open until December 1st; and if you have other folks out there that want to provide comments, or wish to go ahead and add to the ones that are presented here tonight, we will consider them as well on an equal basis.

I would like to send my appreciation to the facility owners here, who have made this hall available to us, to the Connecticut Commission on the Deaf and Hearing Impaired for their assistance, and the Vernon Police Department, and I appreciate them being here as well. And most of all to all of you, if you are driving back, regardless of the route, Route 6 or otherwise, please be careful and have a good evening.

MODERATOR ROSENBERG: Thank you.

(Applause.)

(Whereupon, at 9:58 p.m., the hearing
was adjourned.)

AFTERNOON SESSION

STATEMENTS

ROGER PELKEY: Roger Pelkey,
P-E-L-K-E-Y, 2931 South Street in Coventry.

And I started out, my wife and I have lived in the Bishop Lane area of South Street, Coventry for 28 years. We have enjoyed each day there. Over the years, we have lived under the sporadic - let me get these out (retrieving glasses) - threat of an expressway being bulldozed nearby, close enough to shatter all that we have enjoyed and worked so hard for.

With this proposed expressway, the world of nature in and around the Nathan Hale State Forest, along with the Skungamaug River Watershed would be altered forever, including our way of life.

The mitigations solutions proposed and attempted in past projects have not worked, either in the short run or the long run, and no solution for what is there now.

I believe there is more traffic flow on Route 44 throughout the area than Route 6. If that is so, Route 6 can be made more safer and more

feasible as a two-way highway.

Please consider the continuation of Route 6 upgrades and alignments as the most reasonable, fairest for all. Do not build an expressway through such an ecologically sensitive area.

Thank you.

PRISCILLA BRONKE: Hello, my name is Priscilla Bronke, B, as in boy, R-O-N-K-E. I live at 14 Lakeview Drive in Andover, Connecticut, and I'm here to support 133B.

I am so thankful for people like Dianne Grenier that are keeping this issue alive, because I have lived in Andover over 30 years, and friends of mine have lost their homes because of this issue, and it's time to make a decision. Hopefully, this will happen soon.

When we were working on it before, my husband and I, my husband said, "I will be dead and gone before this happens," and that's true. He has passed away, and I bet I will be too before anything happens, but hopefully, you folks will make a decision.

ERICH SIISMETS: My name is Erich

Siismets, E-R-I-C-H, and last name is
S-I-I-S-M-E-T-S.

I have been involved with this Route 6 for several years now. In fact, I was here on one of the first public hearings in Coventry more than 35 years ago, and it's unfortunate that the road has not been built. We need the road, and I am very much in favor of the 133B.

People talk against the road like if this is a monster, but they do not compare the three that are presently provided for comparison purposes. The 133B is the best.

And we talk about wildlife and so forth. We have passageways. We have under-road passageways as well as over-road passageways for the wildlife, and I feel that this is adequate.

This is the best that the engineering has been able to put together. People that are speaking here today, most likely they are not the engineers. They do not know the facts, but they make out like if they know it, and they are know-it-alls, and I kind of hate this when people are just talking to listen to themselves over the loud speaker.

I hope that the Army Corps of Engineers goes ahead and does build the 133B, and I hope that EPA also will agree with it. This is the least damaging to the wildlife and so forth.

Thank you so much.

GEORGE YNTEMA: My name is George Yntema, and that is spelled Y as in yes, N as in no, T for Thomas, E for easy, M for Mary, A for apple. My address is 61 Vernon Road, Bolton, Connecticut 06043.

This is my testimony for the November 21st public hearing, concerning Route 6 expressway.

I respectfully urge that the Army Corps of Engineers deny a permit to fill wetlands for construction of the so-called Route 6 expressway on corridor alternative 133B.

Such a permit would violate the Clean Water Act because alternative 133B is not the least destructive, practicable alternative for the proposed expressway.

As determined by the Corps of Engineers and other governmental agencies, an expressway located in corridor alternative 133B would cause greater environmental damage than an expressway on

other corridors which are under consideration. In particular, alternatives 133 Mod and 133/18-25 Mod would be less damaging.

Bear Swamp and the adjacent portion of the Hop River together constitute a valuable interdependent ecosystem. The proposed expressway on alternative 133B would present a terribly serious barrier to wildlife. It would separate the swamp from the river; thus separated, the swamp and the river would have much less ecological value than they have as an undivided interdependent ecosystem.

Proposed efforts to mitigate the barrier to wildlife are untested and unproven. Common sense indicates that they would be ineffective in their intended function of restoring the ecological linkage between the swamp and the river.

Moreover, even if the mitigation of the barrier could be completely successful, the simple fact of cutting the combined ecosystem into two with an expressway would seriously degrade its ecological value. It is well established that important, quote, edge effects, unquote, apply to ecosystems; that is, some species require a considerable margin of separation from disturbed territory. Putting an

expressway through an otherwise undisturbed ecosystem compromises the ecological usefulness, not only of the land taken for the expressway right-of-way but also of land far to each side of the right-of-way.

For the reasons just outlined, an expressway alternative 133B does not meet the legal requirements for a permit to fill wetlands.

I thank you for your attention.

WALTER DREW: My name is Walter Drew. It's spelled D-R-E-W, like the Drew Carey TV show and the Nancy Drew mysteries, and I live at 388, Route 87, in Columbia. It's a half a mile south of 66, and I spoke up here, and I ran out of three minutes, and I would like to add a few more, if I may here, to what I said to the microphone before regarding to this thing.

When they build - I've got to show you the map here. This is 133B, and this is Route 6 running through the north part of Andover, and about halfway through, Bunker Hill Road takes off to the north, curves and runs east like this (indicating).

Now, I would like to see a ramp built from north of the Hop River on the curve here,

northerly to the expressway, so that – which is not shown in the proposal by DOT, and because it's not in the proposal, I never get a consideration, and so I'd like for them to perhaps jump the gun and answer a what-if question, and it is would they approve to not go through any wetland or impact any wetland at all, but it will provide a direct access from the expressway to Route 6 which is a federally primary highway; or if this 133B is not built, the others all cross Bunker Hill Road immediately east of that curve, north of the Hop River. They could build ramps there.

Now, what I didn't – what I would have liked to have said but didn't, initially, there was a proposed exit ramp at Parker Bridge Road here (indicating) which would have required destroying houses. It would have been a fiasco for the neighborhood. It's a curvy, narrow road, residential, no shoulders, real hazard and so people said no, they didn't want a ramp, and so this idea of we don't want a ramp is going on until today, which is many years later.

Now, if nothing is built, you got 11 miles with no ramp in between. The people who

live here are shut out. They can't use it, but if the ramp was built on this Bunker Hill Road north to the Hop River, not going through any wetland, then people in the area from Andover and Columbia, if they want to go, they can hop on the expressway, and it's safer that way, and I'm thinking of saving lives or injuries with this type of thing.

That's about - I ran out of time there, so I had to quit. So if you could put this in as a supplement to what I said before, I appreciate it, and the question is, you know, can they - without the DOT applying, perhaps, perhaps sometime in the future, they will decide, well, maybe they could build access from Bunker Hill Road to right here at Route 6. It actually would provide access to Route 6. That's what it does.

And so this is an environmental concern. It would do no harm to the environment that I could see in any way, shape, or manner. That's all I can think of.

EDWARD GRACE: I'm Edward Grace,
E-D-W-A-R-D G-R-A-C-E, 46 Fieldstone Lane, in
Coventry.

I'm speaking as an individual. My name

is Ed Grace. I'm a resident of North Coventry. I also own property on Bunker Hill Road where I grew up. I'm here with my four-year-old, Adam. When I was his age, this highway was an issue. I've grown up with this issue, and I'm growing old with it.

When all is said and done, if there was an easy answer, it would have been built long ago. It couldn't be built in the '60s, '70s, '80s, or '90s for environmental reasons. Those reasons are no less compelling now.

Whether or not a highway needs to be built is not for me or the Corps to decide; however, there is the very real probability that had the current safety improvements on Route 6 been made 30 years ago, many fewer accidents and fatalities would have occurred. The perceived need for an expressway may no longer be a reality.

Our purpose and the Corps' purpose, as I understand it, is to determine which route is the least environmentally damaging, practical alternative. It is not to choose the route that is most politically popular. If your job was to determine the most environmentally damaging alternative, the choice would be clear: Route 133B.

Politically much has been made over this project, including the Governor's much publicized helicopter tour of the route. As you all know, one must look a little closer than that, and I'm sure you will, to determine the environmental impact.

I'm a veterinarian, not a wildlife biologist, but I do know a few things about biology in general in this area. In particular, having walked it for 35 years, the land along Bunker Hill Road and the rest of the route is, despite Connecticut DOT's statement, unique in both its uninterrupted, contiguous expanse and ecologic diversity.

In conclusion, the most environmentally damaging alternative is indeed Route 133B. By statute it must be rejected no matter the political fallout. This is why we have environmental laws to supersede local political pressure for the greater common good.

The State has proposed Route 133, 133A, 133A Modified, 133B and Route 133B Modified and countless other alternatives north of the Hop River. If they're back in two years with Route 133B Modified and amended, it too should be dead on

arrival.

It is difficult to determine which part of no, they don't understand, but regrettably, we must say it again.

Thank you.

BRIAN A. MINALGA: My name is Brian A. Minalga. It's spelled B-R-I-A-N initial A, capital M-I-N-A-L-G-A. My address is 70 Hebron Road, Andover, Connecticut 06232.

This says Dear Colonel Osterndorf:

I am in support of the State application by the CT DOT to build the Route 6 expressway alternative 133B, proposed to be built between Bolton and Windham. This proposal is the most environmentally sensitive alternative that is also the least destructive to homes and communities. It is supported by the Connecticut DOT, Connecticut D.E.P., and the Office of Policy and Management. The majority of communities in the region are also behind this plan.

This expressway is needed to complete the road system planned over 30 years ago. This time has come to plan – the time has come to plan for the future to save lives, to meet the projected

capacity shortage, and to enhance economic plans for eastern Connecticut.

Sincerely, Brian A. Minalga.

JEAN GASPER: My name is Jean S. Gasper. J-E-A-N, S as in Sam, middle initial. Last name Gasper, G-A-S-P-E-R, 70 Hebron, H-E-B-R-O-N, Road, Andover, Connecticut 06232.

I am for 133B. As a former first selectmen of the Town of Andover for ten years, I had opportunity to attend many regional district meetings on the expressway as it goes from Bolton Notch to the junction of 66 and 6.

I have been to three similar meetings as the one being held today, and I'm sorry to say that we don't seem to be any further ahead than we were back in the '80s.

I would like to say I am in support of the State application by the Connecticut Department of Transportation to build a Route 6 expressway alternate 133B, proposed to be built between Bolton and Windham.

I feel that the Connecticut State Department of Transportation has spent a great deal of time on this project, trying their best to

accomplish what is most desired of the proposal. Their proposal is the most environmentally sensitive alternative that is also the least destructive to homes and communities.

The towns of Bolton, Andover, and Columbia, are all in tune with this 133B proposal. I feel that the Federal Corps of Engineers and the environmental federal agency should be listening to these three towns and come to the conclusion that the plan, as it is now stated, is the least destructive to homes and communities as I stated.

Over the last ten years, the three towns have been — their population has grown. There are homes being built daily. The traffic on Route 6 will never cease to decrease. It will be increasing every year, so that there eventually will be just one long line of traffic going from Bolton to the Willimantic line. The road will not be able to accommodate what is going over the highway at the present time.

The highway we have as Route 6 highway is what I call a double lane expressway, and that's what it amounts to, and we do need a four-lane highway to take care of what is being accomplished

on a presently two-lane highway.

The time has come to plan for the future, to save lives, and to meet the projected capacity shortage and to enhance economic plans for eastern Connecticut. It is time to act and not be sitting on your hands.

I guess that's it.

DARBY POLLANSKY: My name is Darby Pollansky, D-A-R-B-Y P-O-L-L-A-N-S-K-Y, 92 Ross, R-O-S-S, Avenue, Coventry, Connecticut.

I am writing this letter on behalf of my personal capacity as a lifelong resident of Coventry. I have many acquaintances and family which have been or are directly or indirectly impacted by any proposal for a highway alternative. I also know certain people who have suffered personal loss of family on the existing Route 6.

I was born during a time when this highway concept, in quotes, was in its earlier stages. It's still a nightmare in the lives of all residents of the impacted towns today, 35 years later.

Prematurely, the State confiscated the many homes and irreparably disrupted the lives of

the families of those homes when alternative 154 was proposed. I find it deplorable that we still sit here today mulling over a highway.

The people of these towns, more so Coventry, would most certainly be patriotic, making sacrifices for the good of many more people as a whole, but there must be a substantially justified purpose and need for these sacrifices. To this date, the necessary data and reports that would support even a thought of constructing a highway are out of date and/or would lack in proof for any alternative.

Unfortunately, many lives have been lost, due to the inadequacies of the existing Route 6 and pure human error. It's unfortunate that these types of losses have had to occur before upgrades were implemented. Safety issues will always exist as long as the human population engages in vehicular transportation of any sort.

There are safety issues on all major routes traversing throughout the entire State. Highways cannot be built to address only safety issues.

Improvements to and upgrades of the

existing Route 6 must continue. Route 6 will still exist despite a highway alternative. Application for 133B or any highway alternative will eliminate traffic, or the increase of traffic due to the continual development of residential property. This is the responsibility of the planning and zoning commissions in each town along Route 6.

Despite the safety issues, there is a lack in the purpose and need for any highway. The lack of off ramps will disallow the numerous local residents to utilize any proposal for an alternative.

The long-term impacts of construction of this application or any application are physically and mentally immeasurable. Whether you consider adverse impacts on traffic and/or human lives, the issues has been twisted and complicated due to the lack of facts submitted by DOT and due to individual personal contributions.

So in summary and simply put, deny the application for 133B and halt this nightmare once and for all. Require the DOT to withdraw any further research of any highway alternative. DOT should concentrate on implementing the improvements

and upgrades to the existing route which have impacts of their own.

Thank you for your time and consideration of my comments and of everyone that has and will speak in regards to alternative 133B and/or any alternative.

Sincerely me.

EVENING SESSION

STATEMENTS

GINO LoRICCO: My name is Gino LoRicco, and you spell my last name L-o-R-I-C-C-O, and I live at 431 Bunker Hill Road in Coventry, Connecticut, and I wanted to say that I'm against all three highway proposals, all the alternatives, especially the two that go north of the Hop River.

I think they hurt the families of Coventry. They've hurt families in the past from Coventry, and with no exit there, there's no positive economic gain for people of Coventry. We're going to lose tax money, but most importantly, we're going to lose houses and families.

It's bad for the environment, and I look on the maps every time I come to one of these meetings, and I see where the wetlands are, and I do a lot of walking in the woods, and there's a lot more wetlands than show up on the map.

I just don't understand. When I moved to the house that I live in now, the DOT withdrew their proposal, and now it's back on the table again, and I don't understand how many times DOT is

going to take no for an answer. Are they going to just keep coming back for the same thing like a spoiled child until they get the answer that they want, you know? Whose idea is this highway anyways? Who initiated it, and what is their goal? What is the motive? If the highway's not going to connect the two cities, if it's not going to connect Hartford and Providence, what's the point of it, and what are the positive parts of it because I haven't heard any.

I guess that's all I have to say.

KAREN FELLOWS: My name is Karen Fellows, F-E-L-L-O-W-S, and that's K-A-R-E-N, and I live at 218 Woodbridge Road in Coventry, Connecticut, and I'd like to give you my statement.

I'm opposed to any alternative going over the wetlands in any of the towns. No matter what type of construction there will be, there will be a negative impact to the wetlands and the surrounding environment.

As a citizen of Coventry, I'm also concerned that this whole project has thwarted neighboring towns against one another. I think that the Department of Transportation could have

come up with a better alternative than going through our wetlands, and I am looking to the Army Corps of Engineers to protect our rights as far as the environment is concerned and not let them be pushed or shoved into a decision because of the State of Connecticut's DOT position on this project. Okay.

I also feel that the areas that the alternatives were chosen is taking up too many additional residential homes. We've already given up 30 homes to this process, and in Coventry alone, they want to take another 30 homes.

This particular alternative is also going through historic areas of Coventry, and it also has a great impact on the residential community that it will be going through. Many of the homes are in the 200 to a quarter of a million dollar range, and this will impact their values greatly.

These particular wetlands are also heavily used for recreational purposes. I've lived in the area for 20 years, and I myself fish up and down that particular brook, which is the Skungamaug River. I see how much recreation is used in that area.

I also see how much of the wildlife,

especially deer in that area come down from the Nathan Hale State Forest, and because Bishop Road is a low area, they come down to that area to get water, so you're going to have a major impact just on the deer alone.

So, in summary, I oppose these alternatives as proposed by DOT, and I hope that the Army Corps of Engineers will encourage the State of Connecticut to look for other options that are less damaging to the environment, less damaging to the residential community, less damaging to the recreational resources, natural resources that we have, and also to consider the fact that no highway should go through any state forest.

Okay. And that concludes my statement.
Thank you.

THERESA HIXSON: My name is Theresa Hixson, H-I-X-S-O-N, 19 Bailey Road, Andover 06232.

We purchased our home three years ago, and we knew that one of the downfalls of buying our home was Route 6, but we felt that, you know, when we looked at the house several times, you know, it wouldn't be that major of an obstacle.

Over the course of the past three years,

we have noticed that the traffic has definitely increased, and the trucks go by so fast that they literally shake your car when they're going by. This has become an increasing concern.

We'd heard, even before we purchased the house, there was a lot of controversy on six, but we didn't realize the extent of it.

We just feel that after hearing everything about six, and it going back and forth that it seems that politics are really overplaying personal safety, and when you do that, when you put politics over personal safety, you take the risk of people not feeling valued and not feeling that their opinion really matters, and our hope is just that they're going to find a solution, whatever route they take, whether it's north of the Hop River or south of the Hop River, do something to increase personal safety.

My fear is when we have children, and the school bus goes down Route 6, what will that mean for them? And I just wonder to myself what kind of tragedy it's going to take for them to really take a stand and make a difference?

SCARLET ZIEGLER: My name is Scarlet

Ziegler, and that's S-C-A-R-L-E-T Z-I-E-G-L-E-R,
10 Route 6, Columbia.

We agree with the original highway in
Coventry, but we do not agree with the modified and
the modified 18-25.

I don't know what else to say. That's
it.

Oh, we just purchased our house in 1999,
and we prefer to keep it and not have a highway
going through our backyard.

That's it.

CRAIG NASS: My name is Craig P. Nass,
and it's spelled C-R-A-I-G. P is the middle
initial. N-A-S-S, and my address is 59 Whitney
Road, Columbia, Connecticut.

Basically, what I would like to say is
that the alternate route - I don't remember which
one it is now - through Columbia and Andover will
not be as - how can I say it?

I'm in favor of the 133B route for
Route 6 because I feel that the tax base would be
ruined in Columbia with any other route.

The added pollution at our end of it,
obviously would be undesirable, and we live on

Whitney Road, which it seems is the down slope, and we would have to go over the highway on an overpass to get to the main road again, and that seems like it would be a slippery situation in wintertime in particular. It's a southern exposure – a northern exposure.

And I think that's basically it.

JULIA HAVERL: My name is Julia A.

Haverl J-U-L-I-A A H-A-V-E-R-L. I live at 167 Long Hill Road, Andover, Connecticut.

I am opposed to alternate 133B. I don't believe that Route 6 is any more dangerous than Route 44. No one's proposing that we replace Route 44, heading out towards U Conn. with a highway.

It seems extravagant to bypass Andover with a major highway to get to Willimantic faster. Willimantic is going down in population, and Route 6, contrary to hysterical popular notions, is not that dangerous a road.

I believe the improvements to Route 6 are having a very beneficial effect, and that we will not need a highway through some of the large, unfragmented forest blocks that this highway

proposes, specifically 133B.

I had some other notes here.

I am discouraged that the issue is again before us. I thought it had been denied several times already and hope that it will be denied again, and that this is the last we will hear of it. It really is a bit much that it keeps coming up again and again after it's been denied.

Another objection I have to 133B is that the politicians involved, specifically the one from Bolton – what is her name? – a representative from Bolton represents Andover, Columbia, and Coventry – I'm sorry. That's wrong. She represents Andover, Columbia, and Bolton but not Coventry. Would she be so much in favor of this highway if Coventry was in her territory? What is her name?

I live in Andover. I don't support this woman politically, but there has been a political action group formed that is opposed to any study of the route south of Route 6. I don't think those alternatives south of Route 6 have been fully explored and really need to be in order to do this fairly.

I know there's political pressure from south of Route 6 to put it to the north, but it seems to me that it's a classic not in my backyard situation because those people are unwilling to listen to alternatives that will save the environment.

And in closing, I would just like to say that I am definitely opposed to 133B.

KIM McMORROW: My name is Kim McMorrow, M-c-M-O-R-R-O-W. Our address is 7 Stonewall Lane in Columbia.

We just today received our C.O., our Certificate of Occupancy, and we've also just realized that our house is located on a cut-off line, which is a brown line on your maps.

My husband and I are playing catch up to try and figure out what exactly is going to happen. Oh, I lost my train of thought. Wait a minute.

Okay. From the information that I've been able to gather from the Internet, it just seems to make sense to have alternative 133B. There will be less impact on homes, less impact on businesses, less impact on the environment; therefore, I support alternative 133B.

Thank you.

KAREN NASS: My name is Karen Nass, N-A-S-S. My address is 59 Whitney Road, Columbia, Connecticut 06237.

I am against the 133 Mod and 133-18/25 Mod. Being a resident of Columbia, I feel an expressway through our town would seriously disturb our community, which is made up of families, established neighborhoods, small church, thriving businesses, which our town has few.

This expressway would isolate a number of residents from the town's main activities by creating a barrier. Columbia has limited space for such a massive roadway. It has its share of interstate highways already which includes Route 6, 66, and 87 for being such a small town.

I feel strongly that alternative 133B is a much more practical plan and would have less - cause less of a disturbance to people's lives through the Hop River Valley.

Since Coventry is larger in area than Columbia, it can absorb the impact of a new expressway much more successfully. It seems that the expressway plan through this area addresses the

issue of the wetlands and has the capabilities to maintain sensitivity to environmental concerns.

DEBBIE TEDFORD: I'm Debbie Tedford.

The name's spelled D-E-B-B-I-E. Last name's T-E-D-F-O-R-D. My address is 217 Babcock Hill Road.

I'm against the expansion of Route 6.

In my opinion, with the increased enforcement, there has been fewer fatalities; so, in my opinion, the answer is more enforcement.

MATTHEW PILLION: Hi, my name is Matthew

Pillion. Last name is spelled P, as in Peter, I-L-L-I-O-N. I live at 710 Swamp Road in Coventry, Connecticut.

I'm against building the highway, and I think they should widen Route 6 because it's already existing, and I feel if they widen Route 6, that would be less environmentally damaging.

MARY ARNINI: Okay. My name is Mary

Arnini. The last name is A-R-N-I-N-I. My address is 700 Swamp Road, Coventry, Connecticut, and I am against the building of the new highway.

It will affect my land. I'm right near it. They won't be taking my house, but they'll be leaving me with a highway going over my road, and my

property values will go down.

Plus, I don't believe that this will solve the problem anyway. I think fixing up Route 6 — and the biggest problem, I think, is they need to slow the speed limits down. A lot of people I hear complaining about accidents. Well, the accidents are due to the people, not to the road. People are just driving way too fast for the conditions of the road. Because there's also a lot of — you could say there's a lot of accidents on 44. Let's fix 44 too.

So, I just want to go on the record to say I'm opposed to it.

Thank you.

DENISE PILLION: My name is Denise Pillion, P-I-L-L-I-O-N. I'm at 710 Swamp Road, in Coventry, Connecticut.

I'm against the building of the highway of Route 6. I think they should improve the existing Route 6. They could use Jersey barriers. They could widen it. They could use police enforcements, a few extra stop signs, and stoplights to make it a safer road.

The impact on Coventry of a highway does

not help Coventry at all. It goes through Coventry more than any of the other towns, and if the other towns are so much for it, then they should have it go through their towns because they would have the access to it. There's no exit - entrance or exit ramps in Coventry that would help us at all, and that's it.

Thank you.

GEORGE JOHNSON: George W. Johnson, G-E-O-R-G-E J-O-H-N-S-O-N, 824 Hop River Road, Coventry, Connecticut.

I own 250 acres on Hop River Road. I have been a lifelong resident there, as my family was before me over the last 100 years.

I feel as though the highway plan 133B is totally unacceptable. The damage that it would cause is irreplaceable. It would not - the balance would not be able to catch up with it in the future. I think that's - basically that's it. That's good enough.

WILLIAM O'NEILL: Good evening. My name is William D. O'Neill, O-'-N-E-I-L-L. I live at 525 Gardner, G-A-R-D-N-E-R, Gardner Street, in Manchester, Connecticut and also own property in

Columbia.

I'd like to take a few minutes to comment on and support the 133B alternative. This support is offered as a personal support; however, by way of background, I've spent my last 40 years in the business of civil and environmental engineering, acquiring Corps of Engineers 404 permits and many other environmentally sensitive construction projects.

I'm also a member of the Connecticut Greenways Council, a member of the Manchester Land Trust, and a trustee of the East Coast Greenway. Once again, I do not represent those organizations; however, that background influences the following comments.

As an owner of property in Columbia, I have spent the past 15, approximately 15 years, traveling Route 6 and Route 87, and being a personal witness to the very sad and multiple accidents; whereby, members of the community have been injured, property damage has occurred, and worse, numerous fatalities have occurred.

I certainly appreciate the work being done by Connecticut DOT to place Band-Aid

improvements on the existing facility; however, I am fully convinced that we must quickly move to a permanent solution, which, in my opinion, is your alternate 133B.

As Public Works Director in Manchester, Connecticut approximately 30 years ago, I was greeted with similar public hearings as the then called Route 6 and currently called I-384, was scheduled to come through the heart of Manchester and touch all of the same issues that this evening's proposal touches: wetland considerations, passing through a reservoir, passing through wetlands, passing through our prime recreation facility; and faced with these many trade-offs, I was fully convinced that I could live with the impacts of the highway, and I did live close enough to the highway so I could hear the noise of the trucks. However, once the highway was built, I did not hear the sound of the many ambulances and rescue vehicles that were commonplace prior to the highway construction.

Thirty years ago, there were mitigating measures used on I-384. There exist today fish ladders, wetland replacements, greenways then called multiuse trails, planned for in the highway

construction. Also, mitigating measures were used to bypass the drinking water reservoir, which is fully visible from I-384.

The 30 years that have gone by has allowed the technology of building environmentally sensitive highways to gallop forward. Certainly, looking at this corridor as a greenway, as well as a highway, could fully support a positive community asset as well as servicing effective, efficient, and safe travel.

As you are aware in Connecticut, and certainly in many places throughout the country, the greenway or parkway concept is returning as an environmentally sensitive design method. In Connecticut currently, the Route 11 design is one of these approaches.

So I urge that you move forward. Please reduce the sound of ambulances, rescue vehicles. Reduce the congestion and the related air quality impacts. Reduce the loss of productivity and build an environmentally sensitive highway corridor or greenway corridor, and please may we move forward now before the count of fatalities increases, as it surely will.

Thank you.

SUSAN KAUFMAN: My name is Susan Kaufman, K-A-U-F, as in Frank, M-A-N. My address is 17 Heritage Road in Columbia.

I am in favor of either of widening Route 6 or the northern alternative 133B. The two southern alternatives would affect negatively Andover and Columbia.

I know that you need to do something to make Route 6 safe, so I hope something is agreed upon quickly.

Thank you.

JOSEPH DUFRESNE: I'm Joseph Dufresne. My last name is D-U-F-R-E-S-N-E. My address is 76 Hop River Road in Coventry, and I want to say that I'm against any alternative for the highway.

I would prefer that Route 6 was widened and fixed. I believe 133B is too expensive, and it will cause too much environmental damage, and it won't fix any of the existing problems on Route 6. I believe that Route 6, if it was widened, would result in reducing drainage and alignment problems that currently exist; and building a highway would not fix Route 6 and would result in compounding the

problem.

The highway will be in my backyard, but me and my neighbors will not have any access to it. There will not be any exit ramps for us, and I'll have to drive at least seven to 8 miles out of my way to have any access to it, but it will be in my backyard.

We have a very small community on our street. Three sisters live next door to each other in my little area, and next door to us, two other sisters from a different family live in two separate houses. It's a very close community, and I feel that 133B would be detrimental to that community.

I'm against 133B.

KRISTINE JOHNSON: My name is Kristine Johnson, J-O-H-N-S-O-N, from 825 Hop River Road, in Coventry, and I'm against alternative 133B. I see no reason for it, and that's it.

WILLIAM JOHNSON: I'm William Johnson, J-O-H-N-S-O-N, 824 Hop River Road, Coventry, Connecticut.

I'm against 133B.

That's it.

JAMES MINDEK: My name is James Mindek,

M-I-N-D-E-K. I live on 420 Hop River Road.

And I think there's two main themes tonight, and one is that pretty much everyone in Andover and Columbia are saying they want a highway but not in their backyard, which really is very unscientific and very emotional, but the second thing that people seem to be overlooking is that a highway doesn't solve the problem.

The problem is the dangerousness of Route 6, which is still going to exist in its present state. I really don't understand why Route 6 can't be widened, you know, where it is right now. It would be much less costly, first of all, but also solve the actual problem of having a dangerous Route 6; and living in Coventry and being through alternative 54 and 133A, I really feel that alternative 133B is really just another, you know, varied model of one of the previous suggestions, and I think it's really a waste of time and money to even consider 133B.

Thank you.

GEORGE KITCHIN: George Kitchin. Last name K-I-T-C-H-I-N, 36 Bear Swamp Road, Andover, Connecticut.

Three points. The first point: The people who want the highway are mostly on the south side of Route 6. They should have it. There are fewer wetlands by far on the south side of Route 6 and thus, much less in the way of environmental problems.

The Town of Andover is on record of being in favor of a highway. That's basically the people south of the highway. When there was a proposal to have the road run south of the highway, they instantly changed their minds and didn't want the highway.

Secondly, I'm a salesman. I depend on good highways. Route 6 is not that bad a road, except for one notable spot at Burnap, B-U-R-N-A-P, Brook Road, where the road cants the wrong way on a curve. It has an hour or so of rush hour traffic in the morning, an hour or so of rush hour traffic in the evening. For the rest of the time, one can comfortably travel 50 to 55 miles an hour from Bolton to Willimantic. To spend this amount of money for an expressway to relieve a couple of hours of rush hour traffic is extravagant.

Secondly - thirdly, the accidents that

are the most severe that happen on Route 6 happen precisely when the traffic is light, not when it is heavy. During rush hour, there's an occasional minor rear-ender but no serious accidents.

When the traffic is light, then people feel free to try to pass when they can't see, and that's when the serious accidents occur. If the highway is built, the rate of fatalities would increase, not decrease on Route 6.

If we compare Route 6 to Route 7 from Danbury, down to Norwalk, that road is, if anything, narrower and twistier than Route 6. It carries traffic that makes Route 6 look like a country lane, and you don't hear about serious accidents. You can never pass on that road, so there are not serious accidents. If anything, we need more traffic on Route 6, not less.

JIM ADAMS: My name is Jim Adams. Last name is A-D-A-M-S, and I live at 48 Stonehedge Lane, and that's in Bolton, Connecticut, near the notch.

What I would like to request is that pedestrian access be addressed in the reconstruction of the Route 384, Route 6, and 44 interchange section where it goes through the notch.

Currently it's totally inaccessible to pedestrian traffic, including foot traffic and bicycle traffic, and I think this needs to be addressed in their reconstruction of that part of the project.

EDSON QUITERIO: My name is Edson. My last name is Quiterio, Q-U-I-T-E-R-I-O. My address is 305 Bunker Hill Road.

I oppose 133B because of economic and also the cost. I believe that some of the current improvements that they've done on Route 6 and additional such as traffic lights and widening of the road would resolve a lot of the problems.

There are other roads that carry the same amount of volume through the State and consistently are much safer than Route 6 just because they have traffic lights.

That's it. Thank you.

STEPHEN KING: My name is Stephen King, and I am writing in opposition of the Route 6 alternate highway 133A, 133B, and 133 Mod.

I frequently travel on Route 6 and rarely experience traffic delays. The amount of traffic traveling on Route 6 does not justify adding

a four-lane highway that will uproot 30 families, change the entire character of a town and impact the environment in a negative way.

In my opinion, there are other solutions to rectify the concern of Route 6. For instance, adding turning lanes, increasing the shoulder space, and to add and enforce patrolmen on Route 6. The State has, in fact, made efforts to making this highway safer and easier to travel on, and it has helped recently. The above solutions I mentioned will be less expensive and will have less impact on the environment rather than building a highway through three towns, 80 percent of it in Coventry.

The Town of Coventry and the members of the Coventry Historical Society have spent years of time, effort, and funds to keep Coventry what it is today. To alter that with a four-lane highway in which it will pass straight through or above a portion of the Historic District is damaging that area forever and will no longer be preserved in the manner it's supposed to be.

Thank you for taking the time to listen to my letter. I hope that you will end the Department of Transportation's request to build this

highway to nowhere that could change Coventry's environment forever.

Sincerely, Stephen M. King.

LAURA MAFFUCCI: My name is Laura Maffucci, and the last name is M-A-F-F-U-C-C-I. I live at 193 Hop River Road in Coventry.

I am totally against this proposal, and I don't believe that it should be passed.

Route 6, I travel every single day, and the improvements that have been made on the road have made a big difference in its safety, but to ask the taxpayers of the State of Connecticut to pay this kind of money to put in this kind of highway for only 12 miles I think personally is ridiculous as well as to mess up the environment in the Town of Coventry.

Thank you very much.

ROBERTA GRASSO: My name is Roberta Grasso. The last name is G-R-A-S-S-O. I live at 193 Hop River Road in Coventry, Connecticut.

I am totally opposed to this proposal for 133B. I do not think a major highway is necessary.

The expressway will not prevent people

from losing their lives but actually increase loss of life, not only to human beings but to the environmental impact.

It will also decrease the feelings that people have for their environment, for their surroundings, for their families.

If you increase the highway to four lanes, it will only make people want to speed more, which will create more accidents.

People need to learn to take responsibility for their driving and for their actions. We constantly try to teach adolescents and children to take responsibility for their actions. The road does not get up and move every day. People need to pay attention to the laws of driving.

Thank you.

DONNA LEONESSA: My name is Donna Leonessa, L-E-O-N-E-S-S-A. I live at 3080 South Street. That's in Coventry, and I want to read this letter into the record. This letter has been signed by over 50 residents in the Coventry area.

The letter states: I am writing in opposition of the Route 6 alternate highway 133A, 133B, and 133 Mod. I frequently travel on Route 6

and rarely experience traffic delays.

The amount of traffic traveling on Route 6 does not justify adding a four-lane highway that will uproot 30 families, change the entire character of the town, and impact the environment severely.

There are other solutions, and the State has made an effort to add turning lanes, increase shoulder space, and to add regular patrolmen to areas of Route 6. This has made a tremendous impact on making this highway safer and easier to travel on.

The work has been limited by the State to certain sections of Route 6. With the positive results that the initial work has generated, the State should perform the work on the entire section of Route 6 between Bolton and Willimantic. Expanding the shoulder and adding turning lanes is less expensive and will have less impact on the environment than building a brand-new four-lane expressway through three towns.

Thank you for taking the time to listen to my letter. I hope that you will end the Department of Transportation's request to build a

highway to nowhere that will damage the environment in this area forever.

RONALD HAVERL: My name is Ronald Haverl, and it's spelled H-A-V-E-R-L, and I live at 167 Long Hill Road and also own the property at 180 Long Hill Road, across the street.

And basically my comments: When I came to Andover in 1968, the plan for this highway - there were two or three alternatives. All were south of Route 6. None was north. And actually if they had been north, I never would have bought the property, but I do not see the need for a highway between Bolton and Willimantic at this point.

Certainly Willimantic is not a major source of commerce, and the major impetus for the highway originally was to go to Providence, and of course, the State of Rhode Island did not want the highway and so refused to accept it at the Rhode Island line; so, it appears to be a legacy that just won't go away.

I suspect that if the improvements to Route 6 are finished, with all the appropriate passing lanes, the highway will become quite safe,

and development should occur along it as it has on Route 44 from essentially in the area of Avon and Simsbury, which is really quite exemplary and would tend to preserve the bucolic atmosphere of the whole area, which frankly is the only reason we ever came there in the first place.

So, I would hope basically that all alternatives are refused, and that Route 6 is improved, and development occurs as I hope it will.

Okay? That's it.

ALAN MOORE: My name is Alan Moore, M-O-O-R-E. I live at 120 Wheeling Road, Andover, Connecticut.

I just wanted to say that I'm opposed to any proposal for the new highway going through. My house is just a year old on Wheeling Road, and I was forced to build it closer to the front of my property, closer to Wheeling Road because of the wetlands that are back there, and if I couldn't build my house back there, why is it they are thinking about putting a highway there?

I just wanted to say I'm opposed to it, and I had that question.

Thank you.

JANET BROWN: My name is Janet Brown,
B-R-O-W-N, 41 Round Hill Road, Coventry.

And I'd like to go on record as opposing
alternative 133B as well as opposing any alternative
that goes through our region.

MAYNARD BROWN: Hello, my name is
Maynard Brown, spelled B-R-O-W-N. I reside at 41
Round Hill Drive in Coventry.

I am opposed to any corridor or
alternative to Route 6, particularly 133B. I feel
that any alternative would be a rape to the local
environment and the characteristic of this region.

Furthermore, I have driven Route 6
several times, and I have noticed that certain
engineering improvements to the road itself have
made great improvements to traveling safely down
Route 6.

Thank you.

DAVID ROSE: My name is David Rose.
Last name is Rose, R-O-S-E, 416 Babcock Hill Road
in Coventry, Connecticut.

We recently purchased a house on Babcock
Hill Road. Actually the house was named – or the
people that owned the house, the road was named

after. We bought the house because it was in a rural environment. We didn't have a fear of a road going through, which I understand there's a need for a road.

I drive Route 6 four times a day. I have a business in Columbia, and I've been commuting from Bolton to Columbia for seven years. I've seen a lot of scary people, a lot of accidents, a lot of different things happen on Route 6, but I think most of it is driver error, lack of police, and I don't know if any of these alternatives are good.

First off, I know there's been a lot of studies done, but where we live, there's a lot of water, a lot of actual ponds, a bunch of brooks, and it's just a beautiful place with a lot of wildlife. I was there today. I mean there was deer in your backyard. There's turkeys. There's all kinds of stuff. There's fishing in the river.

I have many concerns, and I'm not worried about the thing being in our backyard because it's about probably a mile away from us, but I just wonder why it's being built, whether it's for commuters? Because if it's for commuters, people are still going to travel Route 6. If it's for

interstate, how much interstate is there? And is it really necessary to build a 500 million dollar highway, which will probably end up costing 800 million to make sure people get through with trucks and just interstate traffic.

I guess that's about all I want to say. I just oppose actually all the routes and think there's a need for some more information as far as how much traffic goes through, and the environmental impacts which I don't think have been addressed wholly.

That's it.

STEVEN WALLETT: Steven WalleTT. It's W-A-L-L-E-T-T, and I live in Coventry, Connecticut. It's P.O. Box 822. This is a continuation of a statement I made in front of the Army Corps of Engineers.

I wanted to emphasize the fact that I believe it is the intention of the Department of Transportation to build a highway through eastern Connecticut, ultimately connecting Hartford and Rhode Island, Providence, specifically.

I believe that if the Army Corps of Engineers accept any proposal that has been made to

them, they will potentially jeopardize the correct course of action with regards to the highway, the intention of which is to be built from Hartford to Providence.

I believe that the Department of Transportation, their philosophy is to build this highway piecemeal so that they can avoid certain environmental requirements; specifically, they are not compensating or calculating the effects of added traffic through eastern Connecticut.

By building a highway from Manchester to Willimantic, they can say that the highway will not have any additional traffic because it's essentially starting nowhere and ending nowhere, but their ultimate intention is to build a highway from Providence to Hartford, which will create additional traffic through eastern Connecticut, and I do believe that that information needs to be available previous to any decisions made by the Army Corps of Engineers.

I'm just thinking here.

Oh, and if that is not the case, if I am wrong, I do believe that it is in the best interest of the people of eastern Connecticut for the

Department of Transportation to go and make public knowledge that it is not their intention to build a highway from Hartford to Providence as I've suggested; and the reason for this will be that I believe in the future they will build this highway, and I think they should be on record stating that this was not their intentions.

Oh, and with regard to the discussions from people who have lost members of their family and such on Route 6, I too have had family who were in horrible car accidents on highways in Connecticut, and throughout the visits to the hospital and travels to visit them and during their recovery, not once did I try to blame the highway for their injuries. I think that the injuries are due to irresponsible driving.

Also, by building an expressway, this does not address the issues of the problems the people say exist on Route 6. In fact, it will only serve to increase the problems by dividing an already overworked police force. They'll have to separate their time now between the existing road and the expressway, unless these towns are willing to pay for more police, which I believe is unlikely.

And I'll follow this up with an E-mail.

Thanks.

C E R T I F I C A T E

We, Marianne Kusa-Ryll, Registered Professional Reporter, and Julie Thomson Riley, Registered Merit Reporter, do hereby certify that the foregoing transcript is a true and accurate transcription of our stenographic notes taken on November 21, 2000.

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