



December 12, 2022

Mr. Travis Long
Director, Technical Support
Division, WVDOH
1334 Smith Street
Charleston, WV 25301

RE: Corridor H: State Project X316-H-125.16, Federal Project NHPP(0484)118

SENT VIA EMAIL TO TRAVIS.E.LONG@wv.gov

Dear Mr. Long and Federal Officials:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the proposed expansion of Corridor H from Wardensville, West Virginia to the Virginia state line. Although no highway expansion is proposed in Virginia, we are deeply concerned about negative impacts on communities and natural and cultural resources in Virginia that will be consequences of a poorly planned highway expansion in West Virginia.

Alliance for the Shenandoah Valley is a regional nonprofit, working to conserve the natural resources, cultural heritage, and rural character in six counties in Virginia's Shenandoah Valley. We were formed in 2018 from a merger of four long-standing county-based conservation groups and have been working for more than two decades to promote sensible, data-driven transportation improvements.

If Corridor H is ever to continue east past the state line, the possible routes for Corridor H in Virginia are generally assumed to be along the Route 55 corridor—running from the state line east of Wardensville through Shenandoah County to connect with I-81 near Strasburg, Virginia. This is not a suitable corridor for a major highway. It is a narrow mountain road with significant forest resources, headwater streams, historic sites and private homes and businesses.

There is very little support for building Corridor H in Virginia, and we are not aware of any state or local transportation planning for such an expansion. However, even with no construction in Virginia, the consequences of taking a four-lane divided highway right up to the state line are potentially severe. Why expand east of Wardensville when the road will end at the state line? The costs are much too high—financial costs, environmental costs, and costs to the local communities.

The Alliance agrees with and supports the resolutions recently adopted by Shenandoah County Board of Supervisors and the Strasburg Town Council opposing construction of Corridor H in Virginia. According to the letter submitted to you by the Shenandoah County Board of Supervisors:

There appear to be no benefits to the citizens of Shenandoah County that would result from constructing a Corridor H highway to connect with I-81 and/or I-66 near Strasburg, Virginia.

In fact, we believe that building an interstate of this magnitude to the Virginia line would have significant adverse impacts on communities in Shenandoah County and this must be considered before construction of the 6.8-mile section proposed from Wardensville to the Virginia state line begins.

Shenandoah County officials go on to describe the specific natural and cultural resources that would be negatively impacted by the continued eastward expansion of Corridor in the resolution: "*said route through Shenandoah County would likely be harmful to farms, private homes, and public-use facilities such as churches, community centers, lodges*" and "*said route would cause irreversible damage to the Cedar Creek and Belle Grove National Historical Park and the Fishers Hill Civil War Battlefield.*" Officials in the Town of Strasburg expressed similar concerns.

Community members here are worried about their rural and scenic lands, their quality of life, and their historic and natural resources. Leading economic sectors, including agriculture, tourism, and outdoor recreation, rely on the protection of these resources and are therefore could be threatened by the proposed Corridor H expansion.

We also encourage you to consider the numerous comments submitted by Wardensville area residents, citing concerns about groundwater, safety, and diminished main street economic development and local quality of life.

We urge you to use a context sensitive approach to minimize the impacts on Virginia and West Virginia communities and more effectively, efficiently, and reasonably meet transportation needs in the region.

Thank your consideration of our comments. I welcome you to contact me directly at anytime to discuss our concerns, you can reach me on my cell phone at 540.244.7809.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kate G. Wofford". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Kate" and last name "Wofford" clearly legible.

Kate G. Wofford
Executive Director

Cc: Mr. Thomas L. Nelson, Jr., US Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration

Enc: Shenandoah County cover letter and resolution October 11, 2022
Town of Strasburg cover letter and resolution, December 6, 2022

County of Shenandoah

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

DISTRICT 1 – JOSH STEPHENS
 DISTRICT 2 – STEVE BAKER
 DISTRICT 3 – BRAD POLLACK
 DISTRICT 4 – KARL ROULSTON
 DISTRICT 5 – DENNIS MORRIS
 DISTRICT 6 – TIM TAYLOR

600 N. Main Street, Ste 102
 WOODSTOCK, VA 22664



Tel: 540.459.6165 Fax: 540.459.6168
www.shenandoahcountvva.us

OFFICE OF COUNTY ADMINISTRATION

EVAN L. VASS
 COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

MANDY R. BELYEA
 DEPUTY COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

October 11, 2022

Mr. Thomas L. Nelson, Jr.
 US Department of Transportation
 Federal Highway Administration
 400 North 8th Street, Suite 750
 Richmond, VA 23219-4825

RE: Corridor H: State Project X316-H-125.16, Federal Project NHPP(0484)118

Dear Mr. Nelson,

I am writing on behalf of Shenandoah County Board of Supervisors to share concerns on the development of a controlled access four-lane divided highway, identified as Corridor H, from Elkins, West Virginia to the West Virginia-Virginia boundary to connect with I-81 and/or I-66 in Virginia. The proposed routes for Corridor H being considered parallel or are in the proximity of Route 55 from the Virginia-West Virginia boundary, east of Wardensville, West Virginia, through Shenandoah County to connect with I-81 and/or I-66 near Strasburg, Virginia.

In 1993, Shenandoah County Board of Supervisors adopted a resolution opposing construction of Corridor H in Virginia. Shenandoah County Board of Supervisors remain opposed to Corridor H construction in Virginia for the following reasons:

- Said route through Shenandoah County would likely be harmful to farms, private homes, and public-use facilities such as churches, community centers, lodges, etc.
- Perhaps most importantly, it would cause irreversible damage to some of our region's most significant historic resources: the Cedar Creek and Belle Grove National Historical Park and the Fishers Hill Civil War Battlefield.
 - In addition to being a National Park, listed on the National Register of Historic Places as a National Historic Landmark, Cedar Creek was determined by the Civil War Sites Advisory Commission to be one of the 25 most important Civil War battlefields in the nation.
 - Fisher's Hill was also determined by the National Park Service and the Virginia Department of Historic Resources to be National Register eligible.

It is our understanding that the Commonwealth of Virginia has never embraced a similar transportation vision for Corridor H in Virginia. In fact, the Virginia Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB) previously adopted, after numerous public hearings a resolution unanimously opposing the proposed highway.

There appear to be no benefits to the citizens of Shenandoah County that would result from constructing a Corridor H highway to connect with I-81 and/or I-66 near Strasburg, Virginia.

In fact, we believe that building an interstate of this magnitude to the Virginia line would have significant adverse impacts on communities in Shenandoah County and this must be considered before construction of the 6.8-mile section proposed from Wardensville to the Virginia state line begins.

Please find our attached resolution stating opposition by the Shenandoah County Board of Supervisor for plans to construct the Corridor H highway through Shenandoah County.

Sincerely,

Karl V. Roulston, Chairman
Shenandoah County Board of Supervisor

Cc: Mr. Travis Long, Director, WVDH

Encl: 2022 resolution

County of Shenandoah

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

*DISTRICT 1 – JOSH STEPHENS
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OFFICE OF COUNTY ADMINISTRATION

*EVAN L. VASS
COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR*

*MANDY R. BELYEA
DEPUTY COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR*

A RESOLUTION OPPOSING CORRIDOR H

WHEREAS, the West Virginia Department of Transportation has constructed portions of a controlled-access four-lane divided highway, identified as Corridor H, that it plans to build from Elkins, West Virginia to the West Virginia-Virginia boundary, and that it seeks to connect with I-81 and/or I-66 in Virginia; and

WHEREAS, one of the proposed routes being considered for construction of said Corridor H highway parallels or is in the proximity of Route 55 from the Virginia-West Virginia boundary, east of Wardensville, West Virginia, through Shenandoah County to connect with I-81 and/or I-66 near Strasburg, Virginia; and

WHEREAS, said route through Shenandoah County would likely be harmful to farms, private homes, and public-use facilities such as churches, community centers, lodges; and

WHEREAS, said route would cause irreversible damage to the Cedar Creek and Belle Grove National Historical Park and the Fishers Hill Civil War Battlefield; and

WHEREAS, the Virginia Commonwealth Transportation Board previously adopted, after numerous public hearings, a resolution opposing Corridor H construction in Virginia; and

WHEREAS, there does not appear to be benefit accruing to the citizens of Shenandoah County as a result of constructing said highway to connect with I-81 and/or I-66 near Strasburg, Virginia;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the County of Shenandoah opposes the plans heretofore described to construct the Corridor H highway through Shenandoah County.

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December 8, 2022

Mr. Thomas L. Nelson, Jr.
US Department of Transportation
Federal Highway Administration
400 North 8th Street, Suite 750
Richmond, VA 23219-4825

RE: Corridor H: State Project X316-H-125.16, Federal Project NHPP(0484)118

Dear Mr. Nelson,

I am writing on behalf of the Strasburg Town Council to share concerns on the development of a controlled access four-lane divided highway, identified as Corridor H, from Elkins, West Virginia to the West Virginia-Virginia boundary to connect with I-81 and/or I-66 in Virginia. The proposed routes for Corridor H being considered parallel or are in the proximity of Route 55 from the Virginia-West Virginia boundary, east of Wardensville, West Virginia, through Shenandoah County to connect with I-81 and/or I-66 near the town.

The Town of Strasburg opposes construction of Corridor H in Virginia for the following reasons:

- Said route through the northern end of Shenandoah County would end near the town and likely be harmful to farms, private homes, and public-use facilities, such as churches, community centers, lodges, in and around Strasburg.
- It would also likely negatively impact the town's vibrant tourism industry by causing irreversible damage to some of the area's most significant historic resources: the Cedar Creek and Belle Grove National Historical Park and the Fishers Hill Civil War Battlefield.

It is our understanding that the Commonwealth of Virginia hasn't ever and still doesn't include a similar transportation vision for Corridor H in Virginia. In fact, the Virginia Commonwealth Transportation Board previously adopted, after numerous public hearings unanimously in opposition to the proposed highway, a resolution opposing Corridor H construction in Virginia.

There appear to be no benefits to the citizens of Strasburg that would result from constructing a Corridor H highway to connect with I-81 and/or I-66 near Strasburg, Virginia.

In fact, we believe that building an interstate of this magnitude to the Virginia line would have significant impacts on communities in and around Strasburg and this must be considered before construction of the 6.8-mile section proposed from Wardensville to the Virginia state line begins.

Please find our attached resolution stating opposition by the Strasburg Town Council for plans to construct the Corridor H ending near Strasburg.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Brandy H. Boies". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name being the most prominent.

Brandy H. Boies, Mayor
Town of Strasburg

Cc: Mr. Travis Long, Director, WVDH

Atch: 2022 resolution



RESOLUTION OPPOSING CORRIDOR H

WHEREAS, the West Virginia Department of Transportation has constructed portions of a controlled-access four-lane divided highway, identified as Corridor H, that it plans to build from Elkins, West Virginia to the West Virginia-Virginia boundary, and that it seeks to connect with I-81 and/or I-66 in Virginia; and

WHEREAS, one of the proposed routes being considered for construction of said Corridor H highway parallels or is in the proximity of Route 55 from the Virginia-West Virginia boundary, east of Wardensville, West Virginia, through Shenandoah County to connect with I-81 and/or I-66 near Strasburg, Virginia; and

WHEREAS, said route through Shenandoah County and ending near Strasburg would likely be harmful to farms, private homes, and public-use facilities such as churches, community centers, lodges; and

WHEREAS, said route would cause irreversible damage to the Cedar Creek and Belle Grove National Historical Park and the Fishers Hill Civil War Battlefield; and

WHEREAS, the Virginia Commonwealth Transportation Board previously adopted, after numerous public hearings, a resolution opposing Corridor H construction in Virginia; and

WHEREAS, there does not appear to be benefit accruing to the citizens of Strasburg as a result of constructing said highway to connect with I-81 and/or I-66 near Strasburg, Virginia;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Strasburg Town Council opposes the plans heretofore described to construct the Corridor H highway through northern Shenandoah County ending near Strasburg.

Passed this 6th day of December, 2022.

Brandy H. Boies, Mayor

Attest, Amy Keller, Clerk of Council

