

Subject: Department of Army Combined Decision Document, Environmental Impact Statement and Statement of Finding for State Route 6219, Section 050, Meyersdale, PA to Old Salisbury Road, MD, Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT) Permit Application

Public Interest Review: All public interest factors have been reviewed and summarized here. Both cumulative and secondary impacts on the public interest were considered.

+	0	-	M	Public Interest Review Factors
			X	<p>Conservation</p> <p>Modifications to the project’s alignment and limit of disturbance (LOD) avoided impacts to State Game Land (SGL) 231, bat hibernacula, and the Salisbury mine. Mitigation efforts will contain conservation measures and construction best management practices.</p>
X				<p>Economics</p> <p>One of the primary needs for this project is to provide economic stimulus and improve living conditions within the Appalachian Region. The project would result in increased economic opportunity and connectivity providing improved access to labor markets in the region. There are no impacts to environmental justice populations. The project will reduce transportation related barriers, allow for faster and more reliable travel times, reduced vehicle operation costs and increase access to labor and business delivery markets.</p>
		X		<p>Aesthetics</p> <p>The project will be constructed in a rural, undeveloped area primarily of forested land and it will likely result in visual and aesthetic impacts. Potential changes in vegetation patterns over time in areas cleared for road construction and areas of cut and fill slopes, which could result in minimal to moderate impacts to the visual landscape. Mitigation for these impacts could include context sensitive design elements that make disturbances to the landscape less impactful. Mitigation for aesthetics will be evaluated throughout the design process.</p>
			X	<p>General Environmental Concerns</p> <p>Throughout the design of the project efforts were made to avoid and minimize impacts to socioeconomic, cultural, and natural resources. Mitigation measures have been and will continue to be evaluated throughout design to these resources.</p>

+	0	-	M	Public Interest Review Factors
			X	<p>Wetlands</p> <p>The project will result in 10.244 acres of permanent wetland impacts. The placement of fill for the project will result in 9.919 acres of direct permanent impacts to wetlands, and 0.325 acres of secondary impacts to wetlands due to changes in wetland hydrology. The placement of fill for the project will result in 23,192 linear feet of permanent stream impacts. (These impact numbers are different than what is presented in the DEIS because they are based off the resources assessed during the Jurisdictional Determination Field View. These impact numbers are consistent with those provided in the 404 Permit Application.)</p> <p>Additional minimization of impact measures will be considered throughout final design and construction. Wetland mitigation will be provided in Pennsylvania and Maryland. Credits will be purchased from an approved private mitigation bank for wetland and waterway impacts that occur within Pennsylvania. The Maryland State Highway Administration (SHA) developed a permittee responsible mitigation plan. The mitigation plans for Pennsylvania and Maryland will be provided as part of this application.</p>
	X			<p>Historic Properties</p> <p>There are 4 historic properties in the project area. The project was designed to avoid 3 and to have a De Minimus impact to the remaining one. Any archaeology will be conducted in final design in accordance with the draft Programmatic Agreement (PA). The PA will be fully executed prior to the issuance of the Record of Decision.</p>

+	0	-	M	Public Interest Review Factors
			X	<p>Fish and Wildlife Values</p> <p>The project will result in impacts to wildlife and aquatic habitat.</p> <p>Most of the perennial streams are small, steep, headwater channels and do not support recreational fisheries. Furthermore, approximately one third of the perennial streams are isolated or have disconnected surface flows, thus impeding fish passage. Miller Run, Piney Creek, Meadow Run, and one unnamed tributary to Casselman River are of sufficient size to support a recreational fishery. There are no existing public access points for fishing within the project and impact to recreational fishing is expected to be minor.</p> <p>Direct impacts to major watercourses were avoided by spanning via large bridges. The bridge over Piney Run is anticipated to be 180-200 feet at its highest point and the bridge over Meadow Run is anticipated to be approximately 100 feet over the valley at its highest point.</p> <p>Potential Wildlife crossings will be evaluated during the Final design process of the project. The Permittee plans to install various wildlife crossings at locations along the alignment to facilitate safe crossing of wildlife and prevent collisions. Wildlife crossings and other mitigation measures will be coordinated with the state and federal resource agencies through design process.</p> <p>Maryland will comply with the Maryland Reforestation Law and acre-for-acre reforestation either within the immediate project right-of-way, within other SHA-owned land, or payment into the MD Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Reforestation Fund will mitigate unavoidable impacts to forest resources. Reforestation plans would be coordinated by SHA's Landscape Operations Division, and a MD DNR Reforestation Site Review form would be prepared during final design.</p> <p>Endangered species impacts are being addressed through consultation. A Biological Assessment (BA) was prepared for two federal endangered bat species: the Indiana bat (<i>Myotis.sodalis</i>) and the northern long-eared bat (<i>Mj. septentrionalis</i>). The BA outlines specific mitigation measures. The United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) will issue a Biological Opinion (BO) in response to the BA.</p> <p>The Pennsylvania Game Commission (PGC) provided timber cutting restrictions for the state endangered little brown bat (<i>Mj.lucifungii</i>) and the state threatened eastern small-footed bat (<i>Mj.leibii</i>).</p> <p>The Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission (PFBC) may provide conservation measures and/or timing restrictions for the state listed endangered Longnose sucker (<i>Catostomus.Catostomus</i>), which was identified in one of the project waterways in 2023.</p>

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	X			<p>Flood Hazards</p> <p>Hydrologic and hydraulic studies will be conducted in final design to ensure appropriate sizing of structures and will be included as part of future permit amendments.</p>
	X			<p>Floodplain Values</p> <p>The project would not result in a significant floodplain encroachment per US Department of Transportation (DOT) Order 5650.2. Given the proposed vertical clearances of each alternative, no impacts to the Casselman River or Meadow Run floodplains are anticipated. Minor impacts to the Piney Creek floodplain could occur depending on the final placement of pier locations. These impacts would be authorized under 25 PA Code Chapter 106 through the PA Chapter 105 Permit process.</p>
			X	<p>Land Use</p> <p>Proposed temporary and permanent right-of-way acquisition would not change overall land use in the area; therefore, direct impacts to socioeconomic resources would be limited, minimizing the potential for substantial indirect effects. In addition, the project was refined to minimize impacts to agricultural land and forested land.</p>
+	0	-	M	Public Interest Review Factors
				<p>Navigation</p> <p>The project does not result in impacts to this factor.</p>
				<p>Shore Erosion and Accretion</p> <p>The project does not result in impacts to this factor.</p>
	X			<p>Recreation</p> <p>The project will not result in direct or indirect impacts to recreational facilities. PA State Game Lands have been avoided through current project design.</p>
			X	<p>Water Supply and Conservation</p> <p>The Findley Spring provides water for the residents of Salisbury. It is approximately 0.5 miles from the project and will not be directly impacted. The Findley Spring will be monitored before, during and after construction to ensure there are no impacts.</p> <p>At this point there are no private wells impacted. Should a well be impacted during construction, a new well will be drilled as part of the project mitigation.</p>

+	0	-	M	Public Interest Review Factors
			X	<p>Water Quality</p> <p>Avoidance and minimization of impacts to high quality features will be prioritized in final design. Requests for 401 Water Quality Certification (WQC) were made to PA Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) and Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE). The project will comply with permit conditions.</p> <p>Erosion and sedimentation control (ES&C) plans will be developed and approved by PADEP and MDE and the Section 102 National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit will be obtained. The ES&C plans will be strictly implemented and adhered to during construction.</p>
				<p>Energy Needs</p> <p>The project does not result in impacts to this factor.</p>
X				<p>Safety</p> <p>The project will result in the removal of freight trucks from the local roadway system thereby improving safety of the local traffic.</p>
	X			<p>Food and Fiber Production</p> <p>Impacts to active farmland and farmland soils were minimized for the project. The project does not impact any farmland conservation easements. Efforts to continue to minimize impacts will occur throughout the design and construction process.</p>
				<p>Mineral Needs</p> <p>The project does not result in impacts to this factor.</p>
			X	<p>Consideration of Property Ownership</p> <p>The project would result in 8 residential relocations. The impact would likely be short-term as a great deal of vacant land is available for the use of potential relocation. Efforts were made to provide access to parcels impacted by the project and additional efforts will be made in final design to further reduce impacts.</p> <p>The study area largely consists of forested and agricultural land, with concentrated areas of low to medium density development outside Meyersdale, within Salisbury, within the unincorporated community of Boynton, and in northern Garrett County along existing US 219. The indirect impact to community cohesion would be minimal because of the lack of fragmentation proposed as a direct effect of this project.</p>

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X				<p>Needs and Welfare of the People</p> <p>The project will complete Corridor N of the Appalachian Development Highway System), improve the system linkage in the region, provide safe and efficient access for motorists, and provide a transportation infrastructure to support economic development within the Appalachian region</p>
<p>Legend:</p> <p>+ Beneficial effect 0 Negligible effect</p> <p>- Adverse Effect M Neutral as a result of mitigation action</p>				