

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Local Legislators Meet With Turnpike on Northeast Extension Project Concerns

Two local State Senators and two State Representatives met with Pennsylvania Turnpike engineers working on plans to expand the Northeast Extension of the Pennsylvania Turnpike to express the concerns of the residents about the Turnpike Commission's plans to affect hundreds of properties along the route from the Plymouth Meeting to Lansdale interchanges.

Senator Connie Williams, Senator John Rafferty, Representative Kate Harper and Representative Michael Gerber met with Turnpike Officials today at Whitpain Township in a meeting that included Whitpain Township Supervisor Joe Palmer, Plymouth Township Councilman Vince Gillen, Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) Southeast Regional Director Joe Feola, Montgomery County Transportation Planner Leo Bagley and others.

The Pennsylvania Turnpike Commission plans to expand the roadway to add more capacity and safety features for the more than 67,000 vehicles which use the road every day, making it one of the busiest stretches of the entire Pennsylvania Turnpike system.

Responding to complaints of property owners to the legislators that the current design of the planned project to add one lane in each direction to the Turnpike would wreak havoc in the neighborhoods closest to the Turnpike project, Turnpike engineers agreed to reexamine the storm water management plans with a view toward minimizing the impact on the neighboring properties. The Turnpike engineers agreed to work with Plymouth Township, Whitpain Township, and the DEP on a redesign of the storm water management system which accounted for the largest number of properties affected by the project.

All of the elected officials also expressed deep concerns about the plans showing noise walls in some stretches of the roadway but not in others. The Turnpike officials agreed to revisit the number of noise barriers as well, explaining that the costs of the walls, together with their use of federal guidelines, had dictated the current noise wall design.

“I think we’ve made significant progress here,” Representative Kate Harper said after the meeting. “I look forward to hearing from the Turnpike in the coming weeks that they were able to change the design to minimize the impact of the project on the communities we represent.”

Representative Mike Gerber said, "This issue is not only critical to those homes that will be threatened but also to those who will be left behind. That is why my colleagues and I are working diligently and in a bi partisan manner with the Turnpike to take a second look at the engineering of this project."

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