



December 24, 2008

Mr. Jay L. Clement  
U. S. Army Corps of Engineers  
675 Western Avenue #3  
Manchester, ME 04351

Re: Presque Isle By-Pass - NAE-2008-2480

Dear Jay:

I'd like to take this opportunity to follow up on the communication that took place between you and Ms. Barb Pitcairn, a LEAD Board member. Barb asked that I address a few of your questions since I may have a better handle on the history of the project.

First, LEAD is a dues paying organization comprised of business and community leaders located throughout the County. The majority of the members are from the central Aroostook County area.

Second, LEAD initiated the discussion about the benefits for a new north south highway connecting the St. John Valley to I-95 back in **1994**. Since 1994 there have been numerous studies and public meetings. In 1999 MDOT initiated the PAC (Public Advisory Committee). The Committee, comprised of people representing communities throughout the affected area, had regular meetings at the Caribou Inn and Convention Center. LEAD was one of the community members represented on the Council. The meetings were advertised and open to the public. I believe the PAC had their last meeting about a year or so ago. The point here is that the study of the highway has been on the news and in the papers for a good number of years and should be no surprise to anyone.

Third, LEAD has not been involved in the identification of specific routes. LEAD has been more focused on the bigger picture and left the discussion of specific routes to the affected communities. LEAD has provided input but the actual routes were proposed by MDOT after considerable study.

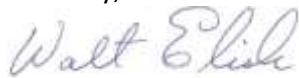
Fourth, after meeting with the majority of the affected property owners on more than one occasion, the Caribou and Presque Isle City Councils, this year, went on record unanimously supporting specific routes in their respective communities. In Presque Isle's case it was 2X. Presque Isle took it upon themselves to meet with the affected property owners to review the various alternatives. After those meetings the City Council chose 2X because of the input received by the affected property owners. The Aroostook County Government also unanimously supported the North-South initiative when public hearings were held on the SDEIS back in August of 2006. The Aroostook County Municipal Association

also is on record supporting the initiative. All of these governmental bodies exhibit a natural tendency to support the majority view of the constituents they serve. Rarely would you see unanimous votes if the dissenting view was widespread.

Finally, it's not uncommon for there to be opposition to any specific route on projects like this one. The process has been in the discussion and planning stage for at least 10 years and quite frankly my guess is that the general public has not taken this too seriously because of the length of time it has taken to get us to this point. Also, it is generally the case that those who are opposed to a specific project are more vocal than those who are supportive. That's not unique to this project. LEAD also believes that the opposition voiced will diminish substantially once one option is selected and thus limiting the impacts even further.

LEAD is sensitive to those who will be directly affected by the highway and wants the impacts to be as minimal as possible. We are in this together while at the same time, LEAD looks to the future and believe that a good transportation system will increase economic activity in the County and contribute to enhancing our quality of life for years to come.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Walter Elish". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "W".

Walter J. Elish  
Executive Administrator  
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