



Friends of the Cacapon River
PO Box 102
Capon Bridge, WV 26711
www.cacaponriver.org

November 28, 2022

Mr. Travis Long
Director, Technical Support Division
West Virginia Division of Highways
1334 Smith Street
Charleston WV 25301

Re: Corridor H -Wardensville to Virginia Border

Dear Mr. Long:

Friends of the Cacapon River respectfully submits the following comments on the Division of Highways' planned construction of Corridor H from Wardensville to the Virginia border, based on the information presented at the Open House on August 18th and posted on the Division's website.

Founded over 40 years ago, Friends of the Cacapon River is the only organization dedicated solely to ensuring the Cacapon River remains one of West Virginia's cleanest rivers. The planned construction of Corridor H from Wardensville to the Virginia border includes bridges over two tributaries to the Cacapon River, Trout Run and Waites Run, and will involve cutting into Anderson Ridge and North Mountain, with drainage into the Cacapon River watershed.

Given the longstanding opposition by the Shenandoah County Board of Supervisors to building a section of Corridor H from the West Virginia border to I-81 or I-66 in Virginia, restated in a letter to the Federal Highway Administration dated October 11, 2022, Friends of the Cacapon River questions the value of building the section from Wardensville to the Virginia border. Significant truck traffic southbound on Rte. 259 will continue to drive the length of Main Street in Wardensville at 25 miles per hour to reach the planned Corridor H entrance from Trout Run Road, using less than two miles of the new highway. The section on North Mountain from Waites Run Road to the Virginia border will detract from the recreational enjoyment of the George Washington National Forest and Tuscarora Trail, with minimal decrease in driving time.

Should the construction of the Corridor H section proceed, Friends of the Cacapon River is concerned about the possible negative effects that Corridor H will have on the water quality in Trout and Waites Runs and ultimately in the Cacapon River both during construction and after completion. Specifically:

Mud – Mud is a major concern. The basic goal should be to have zero project-generated sediment reach the Cacapon River before, during, and after construction of the Corridor H section between Wardensville and the WV-VA state line. The construction team should use its experience in estimating critical shear stress, topographic and soil erodibility factors, and other variables to predict the potential for soil erosion. The team should also install silt fences and hay bales, and perform other common-sense, hands-on tasks to preclude off-site export of excess sediment.

Settling and retention basins - The sizing of settling/retention basins is critical. They must be sited, designed, and built with a capacity for the largest storms projected under our climate-change reality. Once built, their performance must be monitored.

Habitat concerns - Beyond post-construction restoration, the Department of Highways should create habitat for native birds and pollinating insects. The project should include the creation of roadside habitat, specifically in the median and along shoulders, that includes native plant species that are deer-resistant, climate-change resilient, and that support pollinators and native birds. The project should address these habitat concerns in the design, construction, and maintenance phases.

Friends of the Cacapon River appreciates your consideration of these comments.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'T. Reese'.

Timothy A. Reese
President
Friends of the Cacapon River