

David K. Baker
US Army Corps of Engineers
151 Patton Avenue, Room 208
Asheville, NC 28801-5006

PUBLIC COMMENT REGARDING TIP A9, Sections B and C (Stecoah to Robbinsville section)

Dear Mr. Baker:

Petition of the Manufactures of Candles, etc. and Everything Connected with Lighting

To the Messieurs of the Chamber of Deputies

We are suffering from the intolerable competition of a foreign rival, placed, it would seem, in a condition so far superior to ours for the production of light that he absolutely inundates our national market with it at a price fabulously reduced. The moment he shows himself our trade leaves us_ all consumers apply to him; and a branch of native industry, having countless ramifications, is all at once rendered completely stagnant. This rival, who is no other than the sun, wages war to the knife against us...

What we pray for is, that it may please you pass a law ordering the shutting up of all the windows, sky-lights, dormer-windows, outside and inside shutters, curtains, blinds, bull's-eyes; in a word, of all openings, holes, chinks, clefts and fissures, by or through which the light of the sun has been in use to enter houses, to the prejudice of the meritorious manufactures with which we flatter ourselves we have accommodated our country_ a country which, in gratitude, ought not to abandon us now to a strife so unequal.

Bastiat, "Fallacies of Protection"
Sophismes Economiques, 1848

The passage of House Bill 2318, the forced annexation enacted by municipalities, and development at the expense of our environment reminds me of the above petition by the Manufactures of Candles to the Chamber of Deputies. Guidelines for watershed development projects require taxpayers to pay exorbitant taxes for the destruction of forests and wetlands which cleanse our water supply at NO cost.

Many in power have convinced themselves that they are accommodating their constituents by equating paving with progress. Instead of pursuing rail, House Bill 2318 has authorized the department of transportation to enter into private partnership agreements for the construction of transportation infrastructure, as recommended by the joint legislative transportation oversight committee. With NO ethical guidelines attached to this bill, it opens the door for the allocation of tax dollars to projects that are counter to department of transportation guidelines.

At least one House Ethics committee member understands that the fall study of local officials is unrelated to this bill.

If not the House Ethics Committee, who will study the activities of Counties and municipalities participating financially in private engineering, land acquisition, and construction contracts for projects pertaining to streets or highways which ~~are on a mutually adopted transportation plan for said municipality.~~ meet the requirements of subsection (b) of this section within their jurisdiction?

This bill encourages developers to design and build roads that support their private interests. And collaboration with the state invites the condemnation of personal property for alleged public purposes.

The state denied monies for the Heart of the Triad (HOT) preferred plan which included a thoroughfare to open development in the midst of a farming community. This was not a "fix-it-first" solution, as there are a

number of north-south corridors which can be upgraded at 1/3 the cost to taxpayers and without damaging lands in three watersheds.

Then HOT proponents denied the need for ethical standards as advised by the American Planning Association even as they added citizens to a stakeholders committee. They thus lost credibility among the farming community that was told there would be NO farms on 1800 acres.

With citizens, DOT, and the General Assembly concerned about the financial and ethical accountability of both developers and the Department of Transportation, many wonder how filtering more money from private entities into the current system will improve the use of tax revenues.

If there is to be reform of the NC DOT, as was recommended by Nancy Dunn formerly of NC DOT's Long Range Planning Committee, there must be ethical standards. The concerns of citizens must be validated by outcomes whether or not they have "done their homework". And the NC legislature and US Corps of Engineers must help DOT achieve its goal.

Dunn noted that speculative roads like Corridor K should no longer be a priority and stated "we must address the need to maintain our current roads and to offer citizens alternative modes of transportation. With gasoline tax (losses).. and the economy faltering and our urban areas choking on poor air quality, we must focus our limited resources more on maintenance rather than expansion of roads."
(<http://ncsu.edu/iei/newsroom/2008/6debate.php>)

North Carolina is half the land mass of the state of Texas. Yet it has almost the same number of miles in paved roads. Adding new four-lane corridors, which further damage the state's air and water quality, is NOT a sustainable solution.

NC DOT's primary focus is to provide a safe and efficient transportation infrastructure. However, legislation and highway plans that ignore this focus, like Corridor K for which NC DOT has provided NO alternatives to lessen the carbon footprint, ignores both financial and environmental stewardship. Ignoring stewardship is reminiscent of the petition of the candle makers to the Chamber of Deputies.

Citizens want change; they want development. However, Corridor K comes across as business as usual.

Please support CHANGE. Stop the unsustainable plan for building Corridor K, TIP A9, Sections B and C (Stecoah to Robbinsville section). Do not authorize the discharge of dredged or fill materials into our waters when alternative routes like US 129 and NC 143 would lessen the expense and the carbon footprint. Better yet encourage rail. It is the cleaner option.

Thank you for considering my perspective,

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