

TGCC

# The North/South Appalachia Highway Project

## *The R.O.A.D. to a Vibrant Region*

*“Eighty business leaders, civic organizations and elected officials in MD, WV and PA have banded together to form the N/S Appalachia Highway Coalition Partners. The Greater Cumberland Committee was instrumental in helping to get the group organized.”*

*From the  
Cumberland  
Times-News editorial  
8/5/09*

## *Regional Opportunities to Advance Development*

### Updated and adopted by the Expanded Work Group—July 2009

*Priority #1 Project: Advancing economic development in the Laurel Highlands of Southwestern Pennsylvania, the mountains of Western Maryland, and the Potomac Highlands of West Virginia by leading efforts to complete the transportation corridor linking the Pennsylvania Turnpike, I-68 and Corridor H.*

### Short-Term Goals (2009)

The priority goal is to create and build the North South Appalachian Highway Coalition with members representing Maryland, Pennsylvania and West Virginia. *In addition, the following short-term goals will be achieved:*

- Reinstating US 220 DEIS funding in Maryland.
- Seeking support of Governors O’Malley, Rendell and Manchin relative to Federal Reauthorization legislation
- Securing appropriate support of Senator Cardin’s earmark request of \$2.408 million in the FFY 2010 to complete Tiers One & Two relative to US 220 South
- Providing support to Pennsylvania to restore funding of US 219 N DEIS

### Long-Term Goals (2010+)

- 1) Secure funding for Tier Two (FEIS) Study in MD & WV
- 2) Support amendment of Federal SAFE-TEA-LU legislation that provides funding of Route 219 in Pennsylvania.
- 3) Secure a source of funding for design, engineering and construction for the entire North-South Appalachia Corridor

*“There is no single effort that is more important in TGCC’s quest to improve the economic climate in our region than completing the N/S Highway. It is a regional rallying point and we must be vigilant in increasing its visibility as a key ingredient to enhanced economic opportunity.”*

*- Kim Leonard, TGCC N/S Appalachia Work Group Chair*

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## N/S Appalachia Highway Coalition

*This is the number one priority for the Committee. It is key to economic development in our region.*

*-David Turnbull, TGCC  
Chair*

The mission of the North South Appalachia Highway Coalition is to advance economic development in the Laurel Highlands of Southwestern Pennsylvania, Mountain Maryland and the Potomac Highlands of West Virginia by leading efforts to complete the transportation corridor linking the Pennsylvania Turnpike in Somerset, I-68, and Corridor H. Coalition partners will include businesses, civic organizations, elected officials, government entities and media outlets. Our goal is to create an energetic grassroots campaign, culminating in a powerful voice of advocacy with a singular purpose to complete the North South Appalachia Highway.

## Timeline of Activity: January & February 2009

### January 2009

- TGCC membership meeting discussion on economic stimulus money offered the opportunity to gauge interest in N/S Highway/ completion of Route 220
- Peterson & Turnbull meet with Robin Summerfield & Julianna Aubowicz, field representatives for Senators Cardin & Mikulski
- TGCC alerted that the Tier I study has been halted in Maryland.
- WV transportation Secretary announces that the Tier I study is on hold in his state because Maryland has shelved the study.
- Dave Moe, Cas Taylor and Charlie Ross discuss issue with Senator Cardin, who agrees to work with fellow Congressional leaders
- FFY 2010 Appropriations Request for the Tier II study submitted to Congressman Mollohan, on behalf of the Mineral County Commissioners
- Peterson and Moe alert the Western Maryland Delegation members to the status of Tier I study

### February 2009

- TGCC votes to make this our #1 project priority; County Commissioners in attendance (Stakem, Holliday and Spiggle) offer support for this project on behalf of their respective counties
- Letters sent to Senators Cardin & Mikulski requesting a meeting to discuss the status of the project and, in particular, the Tier I study
- Moe & Peterson discuss this project with the Allegany County Chamber Economic Development Committee---Committee lends its support
- Initial meeting of the N/S Highway Project Core Work Team----Kim Leonard, Chair, Bob Smith, Dave Moe, Charlie Ross, Mona Ridder, Ken Dyche & Colleen Peterson.
- Meeting with Delegate LeRoy Myers (MD) ; decision to generate a letter to Senators Cardin & Mikulski advising them that the Tier I study has been halted and the highway project is in jeopardy
- FFY 2010 Appropriations Request for Tier II study submitted to Senator Cardin
- Cumberland Times-News posts article "Effort under way to re-energize road projects" (2/26/09)

## Timeline of Activity: March — June 2009 *(cont'd)*

### March 2009

- Western Maryland Delegation meets with SHA officials, including SHA Administrator Neil Pedersen, to discuss funding of the Tier I study; Pedersen notes “economic downturn” as reason for halting the study
- Leonard, Moe, Smith, Summerfield & Peterson travel to Washington to meet with Senator Cardin & his transportation coordinator, Mike Burke; Cardin very supportive of this project, indicating it is a priority economic development driver for our future
- Telephone discussion with Bud Otis, Congressman Bartlett’s office. Otis urges us to reestablish local interest in this project.
- SHA, through Neil Pedersen, follows up via letter on the meeting with the Western Maryland Delegation; letter cites the “economic turndown” and need to address the McCoolle/Keyser Bridge as reasons for not moving the Tier I study forward.
- Letter from Leonard & Peterson sent to the Maryland Legislative District 1 Delegation requesting a meeting with Governor O’Malley to discuss Tier One Study funding.
- Cumberland Times-News focuses an editorial on the N/S Highway Project – “It’s Needed” (3/1/09)
- “Appalachia Highway Top Spot for TGCC” appears in the *Mineral News Tribune* (3/3/09)

### April 2009

- 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting of the Core Work Group; new tasks outlined and assigned
- TGCC project update and letter to the editor appears in the Cumberland Times-News and the Mineral Tribune
- Cumberland Times-News editorial cites the work of TGCC on this issue, noting the economic development value of a north south highway following the April Board meeting of the organization. A report was given to the full membership
- Plans made to make this a priority topic when TGCC hosts Christian Johansson, Secretary of DBED, at its May 7 meeting
- Senator Mikulski visits Mountain Maryland; Commissioner Jim Stakem and TGCC member, Dave Moe, inform Mikulski that the North South Highway is the #1 priority for our region; Mikulski responds with cautious interest and suggests follow-up with her staff and discussion with I-81 coalition members.
- Project information packet developed to use in generating support.
- Federal government announces the availability of TIGER grant funds; Keyser-McCoole Bridge identified by TGCC as a potential project

### May & June 2009

- Senator Cardin submits an earmark request for \$2.408 M to complete Tiers One & Two of the Route 220 S Study
- Expanded Work Group meeting held with participation by elected officials representing Allegany, Garrett (Maryland), Mineral (West Virginia) and Somerset (Pennsylvania) Counties.
- TGCC members & elected officials meet with Governor O’Malley and Acting Secretary of MDOT, Beverly Swaim-Staley, in Annapolis
- Cumberland Times-News covers the story of the Core Work Group meeting with Governor O’Malley – “O’Malley shows support for U.S. Routes 220, 219 expansions” (6/8/09)
- Maryland Legislative District 1 Delegation sends letter to Senators Cardin & Mikulski and Congressman Bartlett in support of the

### **TGCC's Mission**

71 Baltimore Street, 2nd Floor  
Cumberland, Maryland 21502

Phone: 301-722-0090

Fax: 301-722-0091

E-mail: [info@greatercc.org](mailto:info@greatercc.org)

*The mission of TGCC is to help identify opportunities for collaboration to enhance the quality of life in the region, negotiate broad and sound solutions to community issues and to serve as convener, facilitator and catalyst for regional responsiveness and community improvement.*

## **Timeline of Activity: June (cont'd) - August 2009**

### **May & June 2009—cont'd**

- Relationship developed with Senator Mikulski's Transportation projects Director, Brigid Houten
- Somerset County Commissioners provide a resolution in support of the North South Appalachian Highway (providing a template for additional resolutions); Somerset County Commissioners join the Coalition
- Tri County Council joins the Coalition

### **July & August 2009**

- TGCC works with local officials in Allegany & Mineral Counties regarding TIGER grant funding for Keyser-McCoole Bridge
- Allegany County Commissioners follow-up with MDOT on TIGER funds for Maryland's share of the Keyser-McCoole Bridge; TIGER funds for bridge could free up funds to complete TIER One Study for Route 220 S
- 8 members of the West Virginia Legislature, representing counties affected by the North South Appalachian Highway, send a letter to Senators Byrd & Rockefeller and Congressman Mollohan in support of the Highway
- Expanded Work Group meets and includes elected officials at the local, state and federal levels from Maryland, West Virginia and Pennsylvania; Mission Statement & Goals of the North South Appalachian Highway Coalition are approved; building the Coalition is identified as the priority task
- Cumberland Times-News focuses an editorial on the N/S project citing Governor O'Malley's ability to jump-start the funding for the project (8/5/09)
- Transportation Subcommittee does not advance Cardin's earmark to complete Route 220 S Tier One Study
- TGCC's Economic Development Work Group enlisted to support the North South Highway project; specific tasks include building the N/S Highway Coalition, updating the projected jobs data, and advancing an awareness campaign
- Garrett County Commissioners submit a resolution dated August 10, 2009 in support of the North South Appalachia Highway
- Meeting with Region 8 Development Authority and corresponding county development directors scheduled to discuss the North South Appalachian Highway---POSTPONED
- Peterson does on-air interview with WCBC to update on the progress of the project
- Allegany County Commissioners submit a resolution dated August 20, 2009 in support of the North South Appalachia Highway
- Beverly Swaim-Staley responds to TGCC letter to Governor O'Malley regarding the TIGER grant funds
- \$750,000 restored from the State of MD to complete Tier 1 of the 220 south DEIS study