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CONCERNED CITIZENS FOR RESPONSIBLE DEVELOPMENT

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March 28, 2008

TO: Michael P. Anderson, P.E., Project Director
Tappan Zee Bridge/I-287 Environmental Revue
FROM: George Sherman, President, Rockland Branch
Concerned Citizens for Responsible Development
SUBJ: Scoping Update Comments

As a long time attendee of the Tappan Zee scoping meetings and as a member of the SAWG Bridge Committee, I find it difficult to understand why the solution to our transportation problems is focused so intently on the TZ Bridge. A major reason for building a new bridge that will be twice the width of the current one is to accommodate future traffic growth. The growth potential will primarily be in the counties north of Rockland with the additional traffic being funneled through the TZ area which is already overburdened, overdeveloped and over polluted. It would seem that if the state was truly interested in a regional approach to this problem, consideration would have been given to a crossing north of Rockland. Yet there is no mention of building another bridge or expanding the current one in that region. The argument that mass transportation will take commuters out of their cars is a problematical one at best. Where is the money for this massive project?

The problem of money now is more critical than ever as the State and the Federal governments are financially strapped. The chief financial officer of N.Y., Thomas DiNapoli, has said that he doesn't feel that the state can afford to build a new bridge. He has indicated that our debt is too high and it is compounded by declining revenues. The funds are simply not there. The same is true for the Federal government. The value of the dollar is declining; our huge deficit continues to grow exponentially as we borrow for the war and interest on our loans continues to escalate. Because of these economic realities, it is highly unlikely that we will get much help from the Feds. Even if there were dollars available, they most likely would go to those transportation projects where ridership projections far exceed those of this corridor, i.e. the Second Avenue Subway and the L.I.R.R. connection to Manhattan's east side.

In addition, where once the transit and construction elements of the TZ project were connected, giving some hope that we would not see a repeat of the George Washington Bridge situation (where a lower level was meant for rail but became another roadway for more cars and trucks), these components have now been separated. The state has now positioned itself to do precisely what was done on the GW Bridge.

If this project continues on its current path, we face an enormous increase in car and truck traffic, greater deterioration of our air quality and more respiratory diseases. While it has been stated that the Thruway will stay within their right of way and not take any more property, those homeowners who live along the 87/287 corridor and those who live near them will find the Thruway much closer to their homes. They may very well wish that their homes had been taken rather than be subjected to a vast increase in unhealthy air that could cause respiratory problems as well as the escalating roar of trucks and cars.

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