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We want to begin this letter in earnest, by acknowledging your hard work on the bypass project and diligence in helping the towns of the Midcoast region in resolving traffic congestion along the Route 1 corridor. The Town of Newcastle has supported the N8c route for the Wiscasset bypass and we continue to believe that this route will best serve the midcoast area's economic development and optimize the flow of traffic. After nearly 6 months of work, the Maine Department of Transportation (MDOT) appears to have dismissed any attempt to realign the eastern end of the N8c route, the "Least Environmentally Damaging Practical Alternative" (LEDPA). Failing to provide due diligence on the evaluations given to other route alternatives, which will have far more adverse environmental impact and far fewer traffic benefits.

We do understand that the MDOT will not be able to apply for a permit until funding is in place; this could take 10 or more years. Furthermore, there are indications that construction of a bypass may not be in the best interest of enhancing or reducing traffic flow. For example, the Gateway 1 Corridor Action Plan dated July, 2009 classifies the Level of Service on Route 1 in downtown Wiscasset in 2005 as "severe traffic congestion". Attached is a copy of Page 41/Figure 3-10 from the Gateway 1 Action Plan. However, in Figure 4-9 on page 64 which is also attached the projection for the same area in 2030, showing severe congestion from Wiscasset southwest to the Woolwich town line, even with a bypass in operation. Thus this further demonstrates that building new roads does not always resolve major traffic problems. We bring this to your attention since Newcastle and Edgecomb, in the best interests of our respective communities, have signed on to the preliminary step for Gateway 1 membership. Interestingly, Wiscasset has not.

The N2 routes, which the MDOT will be considering for selection of the LEDPA, are quite long (4.3 miles). These particular routes, will be rarely used during nine months of the year, and will not be used to the extent N8c will be during the busy summer months.

MDOT's study showed that there would be 3 times the traffic going through the Wiscasset village if N2a is used, versus N8c. In addition the N2 routes will be destructive to a large environmental habitat, one of the largest recognized in the Midcoast area.

Some estimates indicate that overall traffic numbers are indeed declining; the third bridge operating just north of Augusta, has successfully diverted traffic bound for Down East Maine from the Route 1 corridor. The MDOT should perform a traffic study, compiling the volume of traffic over the Davey Bridge for an entire year, with special emphasis on daily counts throughout the summer months.

It is worthwhile to implement changes to Route 1, to determine if they would in fact enhance traffic flow for the summer of 2011. These changes should include, employing well trained crossing guards, construction of a pedestrian tunnel or bridge over Route 1. The relocation of Red's Eats to provide better control of traffic, or making infrastructure changes to the Route 1/Route 27-intersection.

Recognizing that such changes cannot be implemented in a single year, the MDOT should implement a standing committee made up of representatives from surrounding towns, including Wiscasset, to work on traffic flow through the village. A committee with this sole objective would be useful to the MOOT.

Finally and most importantly, is the issue of cost. According to state reports, the MDOT has a 3.5 billion dollar budget shortfall expanding across the next decade. The MDOT is shedding its responsibility for the state's minor collector roads by shifting that maintenance, much of it long deferred, to the municipalities. Furthermore, it is unwise, and of questionable benefit to taxpayers, to spend \$100 million for a bypass that will not be used 9 months of the year, and will not provide the needed relief along Route 1.

In conclusion, further research needs to be performed to ensure less costly traffic enhancements are tested to prove, without a doubt, the need for the bypass. New traffic measures are required for downtown Wiscasset. Further research for developing a route to avoid the six hundred and sixty foot radius around the eagle's nest. or its relocation must be performed. Until these efforts have been adequately investigated we cannot in good conscience support the N2 routes and as a result deem them unacceptable to the Town of Newcastle.

Newcastle Board of Selectmen

G. Audibert