



# Town of Wiscasset

August 4, 2010

Lieutenant General Robert L. Van Antwerp  
Headquarters, US Army Corps of Engineers  
441 G. Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20314-1000

Re: Wiscasset Bypass

Dear General Van Antwerp:

On behalf of the Wiscasset Board of Selectmen, I am writing to you in regard to US Army Corps of Engineers May 24, 2010 LEDPA determination with respect to Public Notice NAE-2000-01575-Wiscasset Bypass. The Board respectfully asks that you reconsider this LEDPA finding.

The proposed Wiscasset Route One bypass project has been under consideration for more than half a century. Since the purpose of the project is to increase traffic mobility on US Route One by avoiding downtown Wiscasset, our town is the principle host for this project. Our neighboring town, Edgecomb, on the other side of the Sheepscot River is a co-host. Wiscasset has actively supported and participated in all of the study processes over the years including most recently the Midcoast Bypass Task Force. It is sometimes forgotten that it was the town of Wiscasset that initially requested the building of this relief road in 1970. Since then there have been three major bypass studies, but, in lieu of a bypass, the deteriorating Wiscasset-Edgecomb bridge had to be replaced.

The Midcoast Bypass Task Force was created in 2006 by the Maine Department of Transportation in cooperation with the Federal Highway Administration in order to reach agreement among the various stakeholders in the Wiscasset area on the best alignment and design for a Route One bypass around Wiscasset Village. This task force met twenty times over a period of two years and ten months before reaching a unanimous consensus on the alignment designated N2a. This consensus was based upon the members' conclusion that the only way to solve the transportation problems on Route One would be if Wiscasset and Edgecomb agreed to share the burdens posed by a new highway through their communities.

In choosing the alignment designated N8c as the LEDPA, the USACE effectively threw away the agreement worked out among all the stakeholders and substituted its own subjective judgment. Task force members have asked, "Why should anyone ever again agree to put great effort and time into an officially convened stakeholder's process, only to have the hard-won agreement of the stakeholders overturned?" We ask you to please reconsider your decision.

We would argue that the environmental impact analysis required for the LEDPA determination must in some sense be subjective because elements of it do not lend themselves to quantitative comparison. How, for example, can loss of high value marine worm habitat, of which no more is being created, be

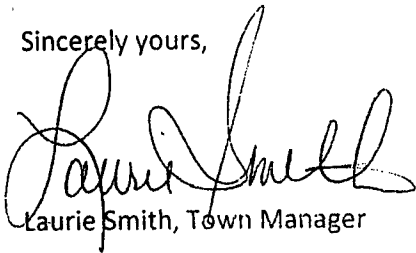
quantitatively compared to loss of forest lands of which thousands of new acres are added each year in Maine? How does a vernal pool compare to loss of wading bird habitat? The tradeoff between them must be subjective. How do you assess visual impact on the human environment for alternative routes?

We believe that N2a deserves to be designated the LEDPA because it is least damaging to the human environment. It does the least damage to neighborhoods on both sides of the river. It has the least number of residential and business displacements over all. It has minimal adverse impact to Gateway 1 designated distinctive and noteworthy views, and the least impact on Section 106 archeological and historical properties.

N2a is approximately equal to N8c with respect to impact on the natural environment. While N8c has less impact on forests, grasslands, and vernal pools, N2a has less adverse impact on marine worm and shellfish habitat as well as on tidal waterfowl and wading bird habitat. Wiscasset is a marine oriented community and the marine worm capital of the world. We in Wiscasset value and protect our marine environment. Alternative N2a best does that.

We respectfully request that you reconsider your decision, and provide us documentation of your internal comparative analysis of alternatives.

Sincerely yours,



Laurie Smith, Town Manager

Cc: Senator Collins  
Senator Snowe  
Representative Pingree  
Representative Michaud  
Governor Baldacci  
MDOT Commissioner Cole  
Kat Beaudoin, MDOT  
Wiscasset Board of Selectmen