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March 30, 2012

Ms. Joan McDonald, Commissioner  
NYS Department of Transportation  
50 Wolf Road  
Albany, NY 12232

**Re: Hudson Fjord Hike/Bike Trail (Cold Spring to Beacon along Route 9D)**

Dear Ms. McDonald,

The riverfront towns of Philipstown and Fishkill, the City of Beacon and the Village of Cold Spring, Dutchess and Putnam counties, and Scenic Hudson, together, seek your assistance to transform a portion of State Route 9D in the heart of the Hudson Highlands between the Village of Cold Spring and City of Beacon from a high speed thoroughfare into a recreational, tourism-oriented parkway.

Our goal is for this stretch of road to become a facility that safely accommodates vehicular traffic, bicyclists and pedestrians, and to take advantage of the route's tremendous potential to advance the tourism development goals of the Mid-Hudson Regional Economic Development Council's Strategic Plan. This section of Route 9D links two of the region's most significant historic communities and connects a number of important public resources, including Hudson Highlands State Park, Little Stony Point, and Mt. Beacon, and offers views of the Hudson River, Storm King Mountain and Bannerman's Castle.

The road is heavily used in all seasons by people seeking to access some of the most outstanding outdoor recreational opportunities in New York State. In fact, the area has been named by Newsweek magazine as among the top ten best hiking destinations in the nation and the Breakneck Ridge trail currently ranks as the number one day hike in an online poll conducted by Trails.com. Yet due to the road's design, the public—particularly bicyclists and pedestrians—cannot safely access these places. The corridor is used by vehicles traveling along the highway at or above the 55 mph speed limit as well as by large numbers of hikers parking and walking along the unimproved shoulder.

Utilizing Context Sensitive Solutions and New York's newly adopted Complete Streets policy, Route 9D could provide safer and more attractive recreational access, encourage multimodal transportation, connect users to the Hudson River, protect the thousands visitors to the area each year, and provide numerous economic opportunities for our communities that are currently being lost. Given that this stretch of the road is the front doorstep to the popular Hudson Highlands State Park, we anticipate OPHRP will be a supportive partner in this effort as well.

We welcome an opportunity to discuss our vision with you and see how we can work together to find ways that safely accommodate the diverse users along Route 9D between Cold Spring and Beacon and achieve a stronger economic outcome for the region.

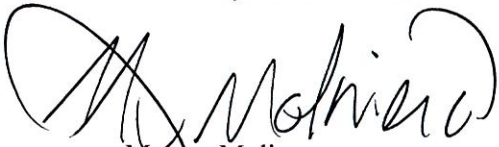
Sincerely,



Ned Sullivan  
President, Scenic Hudson



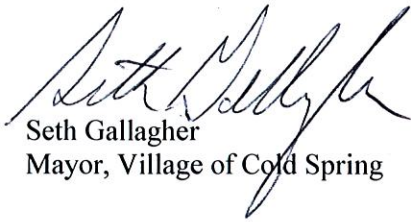
MaryEllen Odell  
Putnam County Executive



Marcus Molinaro  
Dutchess County Executive



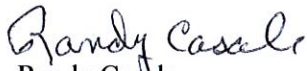
Richard Shea  
Town Supervisor, Town of Philipstown



Seth Gallagher  
Mayor, Village of Cold Spring



Bob LaColla  
Town Supervisor, Town of Fishkill



Randy Casale  
Mayor, City of Beacon

Cc: Rose Harvey, Commissioner OPRHP