

To: Area Media Outlets
From: Roxbury Township Manager's Office

May 6, 2009

For Immediate Release

Recently, Morris County applied for and was granted 6 million dollars in funds from the new federal stimulus package to resurrect the railroad line from Berkshire Valley through Horseshoe Lake. This line runs parallel to the Horseshoe Lake Bike Path that is used daily by thousands of Roxbury residents of all ages for walking, riding, and jogging. At its closest point, this rail line runs within 3 feet of our Bike Path. Morris and Erie have made a case with the federal government to obtain funds that would put this rail line back in service to transport cargo over to the old Westinghouse facility in Randolph. This rail bed has been dormant for over 15 years and was previously designated in 1998 by the Morris County Bicycle and Pedestrian Element of the Morris County Master Plan as a bicycle pathway. The rail bed at this time is owned by Holland manufacturing. Implementation of this plan will impact Roxbury in the following ways:

- (1) The train cars will extend into the bike lane; this will create a safety issue for Roxbury residents who utilize this path for bicycling, walking and jogging activities.
- (2) When trains are operating in this area, this will severely impact ingress and egress to the Horseshoe Lake Island and will impact the large number of events held at this facility.
- (3) Trains that are left on the tracks will negatively impact the esthetics at Horseshoe Lake Park, the Morris County Park of the year in 2007.
- (4) Implementation of this railway has NO benefit to Roxbury. It may assist surrounding communities in obtaining more ratable to offset their taxes. Roxbury will not receive this benefit. In fact when comparing the ratables return on investment to the cost to resurrect this line, it simply does not make financial sense.
- (5) The implementation of a freight line will reduce the economic viability of Horseshoe Lake. As an example, the Soccer Kick-Off Classic generates over \$300,000 in revenues for our business community. Major events such as the annual Memorial Day parade, the St. Therese Carnival and the MS Walk may also be impacted.
- (6) The operations of and type of materials carried over a railroad have federal protection and cannot be regulated by the Township. Volatile chemicals can be traveling the line within a few feet of our recreational facility.

The Township has offered an alternate solution to mitigate the safety and recreation concerns caused by this project and are awaiting a response. This redirection of the tracks will provide a path that is shorter in distance to the destination point desired, has minimal impact to the Horseshoe Lake facility and allows all parties to work together for a common cause. The Township Recreation Advisory committee, Environmental Commission and Township Council are united in their objection to this plan. Every resident of the Township who utilizes this wonderful facility should immediately get involved to understand the impact the implementation of this plan will have on this park. This issue has been brought to the attention of the Morris County Freeholders and Roxbury is awaiting their assistance in revising these plans.

We have a situation where stimulus money is negatively impacting Roxbury. There are other more valuable uses for taxpayer money than to create a problem for Roxbury Township and its crown jewel park. If this must be implemented, Roxbury must be heard and an alternate plan must be put forth.

LEGISLATURES SERVING MORRIS COUNTY RESIDENTS

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Assemblyman Rick Merkt	12 Old Brookside Road Randolph, NJ 07869	973-895-9100 e-mail: asmmerkt@njleg.org
Congressman Rodney Frelinghuysen	2442 Rayburn House Office Building Washington, D.C. 20515-3011	202-225-5034 website: www.house.gov/frelinghuysen/
District Office:	30 Schuyler Place 2 nd Floor Morristown, NJ 07960	973-984-0711
Assemblyman Alex DeCroce	101 Gibraltar Drive Suite 1A Morris Plains, NJ 07950	973-984-0922 e-mail: asmdecroce@njleg.org

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