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Delaware Riverkeeper Network will mount legal challenge to National Park Service failure to enforce Wild and Scenic Rivers Act protections

Bristol, Pennsylvania - The Delaware Riverkeeper Network will mount a legal challenge to the failure by the U.S. Department of Interior through the National Park Service to protect historic and natural resources in the Lower Delaware Wild and Scenic River District, specifically the historic Headquarters Road Bridge and the Tinicum Creek in Tinicum Township, Bucks County.

Earlier this week, the National Park Service (NPS) issued a determination that PennDOT's replacement of the historic crossing "would not have a direct and adverse effect on the Lower Delaware Wild and Scenic River's free-flowing condition, water quality, or outstandingly remarkable values." Tinicum Creek, a Delaware River tributary, is listed as both a Federal Wild and Scenic waterway and an Exceptional Value stream in Pennsylvania requiring the most stringent protections.

Delaware Riverkeeper Maya van Rossum says the decision sets a bad precedent. "NPS made this determination despite information from several experts, including the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, saying PennDOT's re-alignment plan for a new bridge would have catastrophic effects on the downstream riparian corridor," said **Maya van Rossum, the Delaware Riverkeeper and leader of the Delaware Riverkeeper Network.**

PennDOT plans to move the west abutment of the bridge 15 feet and will result in altering the course of the stream. The NPS approval includes a weak three-year monitoring program with no enforcement provisions. "Once the trees and the stream bank are destroyed there's no way to repair the damage and PennDOT will not be held legally or financially accountable under the NPS plan," **said van Rossum.** "Downstream property owners will be harmed by this decision."

The Delaware Riverkeeper Network is calling on the Biden Administration to reverse this decision. PennDOT's replacement project will result in placing an unnecessary, costly project in a rural, conservation area. Historians believe the Headquarters Road Bridge may be one of the last bridges of its type left in

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Pennsylvania. The Keeper of the National Register of Historic Places has determined the bridge is a contributing element in the National Register of Historic Places Ridge Valley Historic District. The PennDOT replacement project will bring more traffic and pollution to this sensitive landscape.

PennDOT's replacement plan will also cost U.S. taxpayers more than repairing the current bridge. The replacement project would use more than \$4 million dollars in federal funds. An estimate by consulting engineering firms shows a repair of the bridge would cost \$1.2 million less than PennDOT's project.

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