



COUNTY OF MERCER

McDADE ADMINISTRATION BUILDING
640 SOUTH BROAD STREET
P.O. BOX 8068

TRENTON, NEW JERSEY 08650-8068

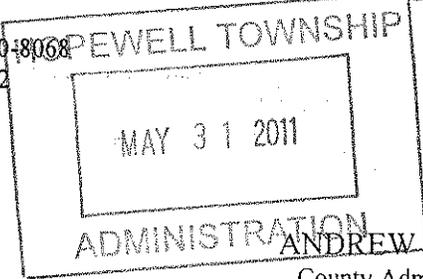
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BRIAN M. HUGHES
COUNTY EXECUTIVE

emailed 5/31/11 ✓ C. TC

*Paul P.
Steve J.
Elaine B*



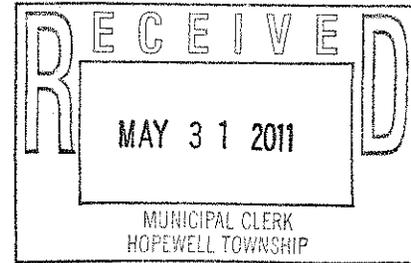
website

ANDREW A. MAIR
County Administrator

KELVIN S. GANGES
Chief of Staff

James Burd
Mayor
Hopewell Township
201 Washington Crossing-Pennington Road
Titusville, NJ 08560

May 25, 2011



Dear Mayor Burd,

I am in receipt of your letter dated May 19, 2011 regarding a concept that would transfer jurisdiction of Bear Tavern Road between Jacobs Creek Road and Washington Crossing Road (including the bridge over Jacobs Creek) to Hopewell Township in exchange for Mercer County assuming jurisdiction of Jacobs Creek Road between Bear Tavern Road and Washington Crossing Road. As I understand, as part of this concept, the Jacobs Creek Bridge could remain closed for an extended period of time until funding would become available for restoration or until the bridge would be taken out of commission altogether.

While I appreciate the township's efforts to pursue a mutually agreeable alternative that addresses traffic safety and preserves the historic integrity of the Jacobs Creek Bridge area, this proposal causes me deep concern in several ways. As you know, the contract for the design phase was recently awarded, and work is already under way. I am also concerned with the County assuming jurisdiction of Jacobs Creek Road, currently a local road posted for 4 tons between Bear Tavern Road and Washington Crossing Road, and having the bridge over Jacobs Creek kept closed permanently or for an indefinite period of time.

Under this scenario, a substantial volume of traffic on Bear Tavern Road — itself a historic route — would be required to travel a considerable additional distance to continue on the other county-owned portions of Bear Tavern Road. Indisputably, the traffic signal at Washington Crossing Road and Jacobs Creek Road, strictly intended as a temporary measure until the Jacobs Creek Bridge was reopened, has improved traffic safety conditions for motorists detoured as a result of the Jacobs Creek Bridge closure. However, the intersection geometry, particularly the right turn from Washington Crossing Road, is problematic. The reconstruction of two structures — one of which is potentially historic — and the acquisition of right of way would be required to appropriately address this condition and accommodate the additional right-turn flow as a result of a long-term closure of the Jacobs Creek Bridge.

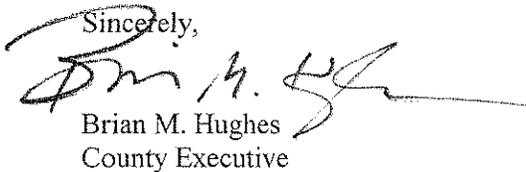
Township officials and residents have repeatedly raised concerns regarding traffic safety in front of Bear Tavern School. With Jacobs Creek Bridge permanently closed, motorists traveling from the south, particularly those entering and exiting the Janssen Pharmaceutica site, are required to travel past the school twice per day. Under your proposal, the volume of traffic passing by Bear Tavern Road would actually increase, counter to what citizens of Hopewell Township have requested.

Based on feedback I have received from Janssen representatives as well as State officials, direct access from Janssen Pharmaceutica to NJ Route 29 is not an option and is not being pursued at this time. I continue to have serious concerns regarding emergency response to the Bear Tavern School and to the many residents who live on or directly access Bear Tavern Road.

In summary, I do not believe that the proposed exchange of roadway jurisdictions with Jacobs Creek Bridge closed for an extended period of time and possibly indefinitely is in the best interest of the County. All along we have pursued an inclusive and cooperative process to arrive at this point, and that is to have a professional engineer present a design for what we believe will be a safe, efficient roadway and bridge that fits into the character of the township and fulfills the needs of the region.

I therefore do not support the township's proposal for Mercer County to assume jurisdiction of Jacobs Creek Road between Bear Tavern Road and Washington Crossing Road. As we move forward with this project, I continue to welcome constructive dialogue on ways to balance traffic safety concerns while preserving the bucolic nature of the area.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Brian M. Hughes", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Brian M. Hughes
County Executive