



pennsylvania environmental council

The Honorable Anthony R. Foxx  
Secretary of Transportation  
United States Department of Transportation  
1200 New Jersey Ave SE  
Washington, D.C. 20590

April 25, 2016

RE: FY2016 TIGER Discretionary Grant  
I-579 "Cap" Urban Connector Project

Dear Secretary Foxx,

On behalf of the Pennsylvania Environmental Council, I am writing to you in regards to the Sports & Exhibition Authority of Pittsburgh and Allegheny County (SEA) application to the FY2016 TIGER Discretionary Grant ("TIGER VII") program. As a statewide organization, we have worked in many communities, both urban and rural, to develop sustainable transportation networks that connect residents to natural resources, active transportation, and outdoor recreation.

When the I-579 Crosstown Boulevard Highway was constructed in the 1950s, it severed the link between the Hill District, a predominantly African American community, and downtown Pittsburgh. This highway continues to be a physical, visual, and psychological barrier, separating this neighborhood from the greater city. As the Hill District and neighboring Uptown experience significant reinvestment and community development initiatives, it is imperative that the City re-connect these communities to downtown. The timing allows for leverage of the significant private investment in the immediate surrounding area, including redevelopment of the 28-acre former Civic Arena site.

The proposed project to "cap" the highway will accomplish multiple goals that align with the work of Pennsylvania Environmental Council. It will improve the walkability of this neighborhood and will connect bike corridors; install green infrastructure in an area nearly devoid of permeable surfaces, assisting with Pittsburgh's combined sewer overflow challenges; and provide much needed green space to combat the heat island effect.

In addition to the extremely important social impacts of the proposed project, the cap will also contribute to the goal of the *Pittsburgh Climate Action Plan*. Both PEC and the SEA are members of the Pittsburgh Climate Initiative, the organization charged with implementation of the plan.

Thank you for the opportunity to write this letter expressing our interest in this project. Please feel free to reach me at 412-481-9400 if we can provide further information.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Davitt B. Woodwell', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Davitt B. Woodwell  
President