



AUG 17 2011

Mr. Ernie Blais  
Division Administrator  
Federal Highways Administration  
840 Bear Tavern Road, Suite 310  
West Trenton, New Jersey 08628

Dear Mr. Blais:

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has reviewed the Federal Highway Administration's (FHWA) Environmental Assessment (EA) dated July 2011, to construct improvements and add a new bridge span to the Route 72 Manahawkin Bay Bridges, including intersection improvements starting at Marsha Drive in Stafford Township, NJ and ending at Long Beach Boulevard in Ship Bottom, Ocean County, NJ. The purpose of the project is to improve the structural integrity of the Manahawkin Bay Bridges and provide better levels of service at the intersection of Route 72 and Marsh Drive, improve traffic operation in Ship Bottom, and address flood impacts on 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> Streets in Ship Bottom.

The EA responds to the majority of EPA's concerns as described in our June 29, 2010 comment letter on the Draft EA. Also, the quality of the EA is excellent, and much improved over the Draft EA. EPA notes that while the New Jersey Department of Transportation (NJDOT) is planning to build sand filters under the paved surface of the road to treat runoff, NJDOT will still be exploring the feasibility of building or rehabilitating offsite runoff systems with the Barnegat Bay Partnership, the county and local governments. As a member of the Partnership, EPA looks forward to continuing work with NJDOT to maintain and enhance the water quality of Barnegat Bay by curtailing stormwater runoff from roads.

Should you have any questions, please call Lingard Knutson of my staff at (212) 637-3747. Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,

Grace Musumeci, Chief  
Environmental Review Section

cc: Bruce Hawkinson, Environmental Project Manager, NJDOT