

Addison County Regional Planning Commission

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November 7, 2018
VIA Regular Mail and E-mail

Joseph Flynn, Secretary
Vermont Agency of Transportation
National Life Building
1 National Life Drive
Montpelier, Vermont 05633-5001

Re: Safety Improvements on State Highway 125

Dear Secretary Flynn:

The Transportation Advisory Committee of the Addison County Regional Planning Commission ("ACRPC") and the Selectboards of the Towns of Bridport, Cornwall and Middlebury join together to request that the Agency of Transportation act immediately to remove or lower a small ledge outcropping underlying State Highway 125 just to the west of Middlebury College and the Village of Middlebury on the town border between Middlebury and Cornwall. This ledge knoll, while not very big, creates a serious safety hazard for drivers, bikers and walkers in the area of the College's food gardens. The knoll creates a blind spot in this otherwise relatively flat section of road that is not readily apparent to most drivers. Sadly, on September 13th, this blind spot contributed to the fatal crash between a Cornwall fire truck responding to a call and Deane Rubright, a driver who had pulled over to allow a previous fire truck to pass. When Mr. Rubright pulled back onto Route 125, he could not see the second fire truck bearing down on him, nor could the fire truck see him.

Our communities' reaction to this accident have been significant. This is just the most recent in a string of fatalities on this portion of Route 125. Older residents of each community independently pointed out that there have been a number of other fatalities in the vicinity of this ledge.

Steve Huestis, a former Bridport Selectboard chair, wrote, "In my lifetime too many people have lost their lives at that hill. In December 2002 two adults, one child and twin unborn babies died in an accident there. When I was in school a college student lost their life when hit by a car."

Brian Kemp, the Road Commissioner from Cornwall and a generation younger than Mr. Huestis, noted he had lost a friend to this stretch of highway.

Richard Hosking, Vtrans's longtime District Manager, added that some years ago two state employees were hit while working on Route 125 in this area just below the College.

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Cornwall
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Weybridge
Leicester
Ripton
Whiting



Addison County
Regional Planning Commission

The communities that use this State Highway daily respectfully request that The Agency of Transportation investigate the highway's condition, take immediate remedial actions to make it safer and to alert drivers they need to be on their guard and remove the knoll to eliminate this hazard before another accident occurs. Thank you for your consideration. We look forward to your prompt response and action.

Sincerely,

Addison County Regional Planning Commission

By: 
Adam Lougee, Executive Director

Middlebury Selectboard

By: 
Brian Carpenter, Chair

Cornwall Selectboard

By: _____
Ben Marks, Chair

Bridport Selectboard

By: _____
Joan Huestis, Chair

Cc: Addison County Legislative Delegation
Dick Hosking, District Manager