



BUCKS COUNTY HERALD

Devil's Tea Table Alliance asks for Tinicum support

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Cliff Lebowitz

While Tinicum Township continues to await resolution of a dispute with PennDOT on how a 10-year old bridge closure is to be reopened, it is also being asked to support a protest against a rockfall mitigation plan put forth by PennDOT's counterpart across the Delaware River in New Jersey.

At the June 15 public board of supervisors meeting, Pipersville resident Steve Freeman of the Devils Tea Table Alliance gave a presentation on the group's objection to the New Jersey Dept. of Transportation (NJ DOT) plan for rockfall mitigation for a three-mile stretch of unique formation directly across the Delaware River from Tinicum – a plan they regard as grossly excessive compared to the actual need.

With over 30 supporters in attendance, he presented a petition to the board of supervisors, which he noted had 579 signatures, including 121 from Tinicum, and which asked the township to adopt a resolution in support of their protest, on

cost and environmental grounds. Supervisors said they would give the matter due consideration, which Freeman explained was needed to support their lobbying of state and federal officials on the issue, as other municipalities in both Pennsylvania and New Jersey had already done.

Freeman also yielded the floor to Tara Mezzanotte, representing another group facing a similar issue further up the river at the Delaware Water Gap. She claimed fundamental similarity in the two issues, related to the rockfall mitigation plans being far in excess of what was actually needed, and thereby dramatically increasing the federal tax dollars cost, while raising significant environmental issues. She also urged consideration of the Delaware Valley as common ground for both states, with the rockfall plans not just a New Jersey issue because they were put forth by NJDOT.

Supervisors said they expected to report back on the resolution request at their next meeting on July 13. Meanwhile, regarding the reopening of the Headquarters Road crossing of Tinicum Creek at Sheep Hole Road, they said they understood the matter to be in the hands of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection, whose permitting is required in order for PennDOT's two-lane bridge replacement plan to go forward.

Opponents of that plan have insisted on rehabilitation of the existing 200-year old support structure and the 100-year old deck as a more cost-effective solution that also provides for needed environmental and historic asset protections.



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