

**For Immediate Release**

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## **Citizens Groups in Virginia, West Virginia Sue to Stop Corridor H**

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Citizen-groups in Virginia and West Virginia filed suit in federal court today to stop construction of a seven-mile section of Corridor H highway from Wardensville in Hardy County, W. Va. to the Virginia line. The groups say the four-lane highway would deflate the local rural economy and threaten drinking water supplies, wildlife habitat and other natural resources in both states.

West Virginia Division of Highways (WVDOH) had announced plans earlier this year to let out construction contracts by this month, but the suit could throw another roadblock to the long-controversial project.

Stewards of the Potomac Highlands and the Virginia Wilderness Committee, represented by attorneys Andrea Ferster and Brad Stephens, filed suit against WVDOH and the Federal Highway Administration in the U.S. District Court for the Northern District in West Virginia. They argue that the highway agencies failed to consider less expensive and less environmentally damaging alternatives. (CA No. 5:26-cv-11111)

Now estimated to cost \$542 million, this Wardensville to Virginia line section of Corridor H would “cross through the iconic George Washington National Forest and bypass and severely impair the economy of Wardensville’s historic Main Street district.” It would also “impact the lives of farm and homeowners in its path,” reads the legal complaint. “The far-reaching consequences of this project will have economic, environmental, and other ripple effects decades—indeed, centuries—into the future.”

The groups also launched a website to raise awareness about the proposed highway—[Corridor H: Highway to Nowhere](http://highwaytonowhere.org) (highwaytonowhere.org).

In the 1960s, the Appalachian Regional Commission planned the four-lane highway which was slated to reach 15 miles into Virginia to connect with I-81 and I-66 in Strasburg. Since 1995, however, the Commonwealth of Virginia has said that it has no plans to build this Virginia section. Further, the Shenandoah County Board of Supervisors and the Town of Strasburg declared their opposition to Corridor H in 2022.

If built, the Wardensville to Virginia line section of Corridor H would end abruptly at the state line, funneling traffic into the two-lane Route 55/48, a designated Virginia Scenic Byway also known as the John Marshall Highway. The citizen groups warn this would add more peril to hikers on the popular Tuscarora Trail as they cross Route 55/48 on the crest of Great North Mountain.

Most sections of Corridor H have been built across eastern West Virginia, from I-79 to the western edge of Wardensville, except for another controversial section in Tucker County, where environmentalists are urging a different, northerly route. But WVDOH acknowledged traffic on the corridor is only half what it projected in its 1996 environmental documents.

“We object to an unneeded four-lane that would rip through 2.4 miles of intact forest in the George Washington National Forest,” said Virginia Wilderness Committee board member Andrew Young. “During Earth Month we celebrate the rich forest ecosystems, wildlife habitat, native trout streams, and many outdoor recreational resources of this Allegheny Mountain region – all of which is threatened by the Corridor H boondoggle.”

“Legal action could, and should, cause our officials to re-think their priorities,” said Bonni McKeown, president of Stewards of the Potomac Highlands. “It’s time our transportation policies take ‘wild, wonderful West Virginia’ seriously and support our natural beauty, our historic towns, and people’s homeplaces and farms instead of tearing down our special places.”

WVDOH acknowledged in its 2025 federally required environmental documents that the four-lane construction would traverse 2.4 miles and 300 acres of George Washington National Forest in West Virginia, cut through an aquifer supplying drinking water for the Town of Wardensville, and decrease customer traffic to businesses on Wardensville’s Main Street. However, WVDOH has refused to consider the alternative of making safety improvements to the existing two-lane Route 55/48 over Great North Mountain.

West Virginia public officials, including Gov. Patrick Morrissey and U.S. Senators Jim Justice and Shelley Moore Capito, have continued to prioritize Corridor H, even though Morrissey announced last year that the state highway budget is inadequate. Highway engineer groups rank West Virginia among the most deficient states in the U.S. in bridge repairs.

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*Organized in 1969, the Virginia Wilderness Committee (VWC) works to permanently protect the best of Virginia's wild places for future generations, foster understanding and appreciation of Wilderness, and promote enjoyment and stewardship of our last remaining wildlands. The Virginia Wilderness Committee is a 501(C)3 non-profit citizens' group. <https://www.vawilderness.org/>*

Economically and culturally, our area has a proud tradition of small farm and forest ownership and historic towns. Stewards of the Potomac Highlands, a 501c4 nonprofit citizens group, networks in West Virginia's northeastern counties to protect this heritage and support an environmentally and socially sustainable, locally controlled economy. <https://potomachighlandstewards.org/>