



Borough of Hillsdale

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John J. Ruocco, Mayor

September 27, 2018

Commissioner Diane Gutierrez-Scaccetti
New Jersey Department of Transportation
Department of Transportation
P.O. Box 600
Trenton, NJ 08625-0600

Dear Commissioner Gutierrez-Scaccetti:

New Jersey will shortly have raised its gas tax some 41 cents at the pump to continue to collect some \$2 billion annually for road and bridge construction via the highway trust fund. With this significant revenue boost comes the large responsibility to appropriate these funds effectively and quickly.

For the past two years, the Borough of Hillsdale has watched the Hillsdale Avenue railroad grade crossing (w/NJTransit) gradually fall apart in our downtown. It got to the point that the crossing was a hazard for our snow plows last winter, striking the hidden, up-turned rubber and is an on-going hazard for our emergency services personal to traverse. Hillsdale Avenue is a main County arterial, and the Borough's primary east-west thoroughfare.

Last year, NJDOT approached the Borough and offered to reconstruct three of our four downtown grade crossings if we were willing to sacrifice one. The Governing Body, with input from our police and first responders, chose not to close one because of traffic circulation concerns, but the crossings still require reconstruction. We were informed that there were some funding issues that had to be resolved and that our choice would take a longer pathway to completion. We asked the NJDOT to promptly proceed with replacing the Hillsdale Avenue crossing with concrete panels as it was in such poor disrepair.

The NJDOT is now slowly moving ahead with their Diagnostic Team Meeting, but we are concerned that other scheduling and financial priorities will interfere with our crossing replacement. I am asking that your office please push our project along as it now appears that the crossing will not get addressed until next summer. This just extends the possibility of an accident occurring, and to the public, certainly appears that the Borough has been forgotten, despite the availability of the tax revenue mentioned above.



Please assure us that the grade crossing will receive immediate attention, along with our other four crossings in the Borough.

Respectfully,



John J. Ruocco
Mayor
Borough of Hillsdale

Cc: Hillsdale Borough Council
Hillsdale Borough Administrator-Jonathan DeJoseph
Hillsdale Borough Engineer-Christopher Statile