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**TREE-CLEARING WORK SET TO BEGIN NEXT WEEK
FOR NOISE WALL CORRIDOR ALONG I-95 IN LOWER MAKEFIELD**
*Noise-Abatement Walls to Precede 2017 Construction Start
For Scudder Falls Bridge Replacement Project*

NEW HOPE, PA – The Delaware River Joint Toll Bridge Commission today announced that January 4 is the anticipated start date for advanced tree and brush clearing work for a series of noise-abatement walls that will be constructed later this year along Pennsylvania’s I-95 approach to the Scudder Falls Bridge.

The site preparation work will consist of the clearing, removal and disposal of trees, logs, dead trees and other vegetation and debris at certain sections on both sides of the I-95 segment between the Route 332/Newtown interchange and the Taylorsville Road interchange in Lower Makefield Township, PA. Other tasks to be performed as part of the vegetation removal effort include implementation of soil-erosion and sediment-control measures, storm-water inlet protection, and silt mitigation within the cleared areas.

The work is restricted to take place only within the limits of public right-of-way flanking the highway. A.P. Construction of Blackwood, N.J. will perform the tree-clearing work under a competitively bid contract approved by the Commission in November.

The clearing will allow for the subsequent installation of noise-abatement walls at eligible locations as determined in the environmental documentation process for the Commission’s Scudder Falls Bridge Replacement Project. Construction of the noise walls in Pennsylvania is expected to begin under a separate contract during the spring.

The Pennsylvania tree clearing and noise wall construction is the first in a series of advanced construction activities that are planned to take place next year before the Scudder Falls Bridge Replacement Project gets fully underway in 2017.

Other advanced project work includes tree clearing along New Jersey’s I-95 approach to the bridge in fall 2016. Also in late 2016 and early 2017, tree clearing is expected to be conducted in the areas where the Scudder Falls Replacement Bridge is to be constructed and at the bridge’s two adjoining interchanges, both of which will undergo reconfiguration as part of the bridge project.

An open house on the upcoming tree cutting/noise wall construction in Pennsylvania was held in early December. Additional public outreach activities are anticipated in 2016, and will include a session on the tree cutting work along I-95 in Ewing, N.J.

A key element of the December open house was a survey seeking input from affected Lower Makefield residents about what design option and color should be used on the resident side for the noise walls along I-95 in Lower Makefield. The survey form provides three architectural treatment options and – ashlar stone, fractured rock and brick – and three color options – tan, brown, and grey. (No color choice applies if brick is a resident’s preference.)

The survey results will enable project designers to determine what the residential side of the noise walls should look like. The Commission has extended the deadline for submission of completed noise wall survey forms until December 31. The survey may be downloaded from the Commission’s website’s homepage at: www.drjtbc.org.

The Scudder Falls Bridge Replacement Project involves a heavily commuted 4.4-mile portion of the I-95 corridor extending from the Route 332/Yardley-Newtown Road exit in Bucks County, Pa. and the Bear Tavern Road/Route 579 exit in Mercer County, N.J. The congestion-prone highway segment is a choke point for job-commuter traffic between Bucks County, Pa. and Central Jersey.

The nearly 55-year-old bridge and nearby interchanges are classified as functionally obsolete. To address recurring traffic safety and capacity problems at the bridge, its adjoining interchanges and I-95 approaches, the Commission is pursuing a comprehensive project for the highway segment.

The project is currently in the final design stage. Once construction gets fully underway in early 2017, it’s expected that it will take up to four years to complete all of the project’s elements. More precise construction start and end dates will be established as final design progresses toward completion in mid-2016.

About the Commission

The Delaware River Joint Toll Bridge Commission was formed by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and the State of New Jersey in 1934. It operates seven toll bridges and 13 toll-supported bridges, two of which are pedestrian-only spans. The Commission is a self-supporting public-service agency that receives neither federal nor state tax dollars to finance its projects or operations. Funding for the operations, maintenance and upkeep of its bridges and related transportation facilities is solely derived from revenues collected at its toll bridges. The Commission’s jurisdiction extends along the Delaware River from the Philadelphia-Bucks County line north to the New Jersey/New York border. The bridges carried about 138.2 million cars and trucks in 2014. For more information about the Commission and its various initiatives to deliver safer and more convenient travel for its customers, please see: www.drjtbc.org.