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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
December 13, 2011

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**HEARING ON I-95/SCUDDER FALLS BRIDGE IMPROVEMENT PROJECT
DOCUMENT ASSESSING TOLLING IMPACTS SET FOR THURSDAY**
*Testimony Can Be Given Four Ways: at Public Hearing, via Stenographer in a Private
Room, Submittals of Prepared Written Statements, or Hand-written Comment Cards*

NEW HOPE, PA – The Delaware River Joint Toll Bridge Commission today announced that citizens will have four ways to provide official comment Thursday night when the agency hosts a public hearing on a 309-page Addendum to the Environmental Assessment document for the I-95/Scudder Falls Bridge Improvement Project.

The public hearing will take place Thursday, December 15, at the Sheraton Bucks County Hotel at 400 Oxford Valley Road, Langhorne, PA. (The hotel is across from the Oxford Valley Mall, situated between Route 1 and Business Route 1.) The hearing is scheduled to be held from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m., but may go longer if more time is needed to handle all attendees wishing to provide testimony.

The hearing's focus will be the inch-thick Addendum to the Environmental Assessment (EA) that was released for the project on November 30. The new project documentation examines the potential impacts of the establishment of a cashless tolling system – no toll booths -- in the southbound direction at the Scudder Falls Replacement Bridge.

The Commission voted two years ago to authorize cashless tolling for the new facility due to the absence of federal and state transportation financial support for the project and because it would have been unfair to apply the financial costs solely to motorists using the Commission's seven current toll bridges.

The Commission's decision to toll the Scudder Falls Replacement Bridge came shortly after the project's original 561-page, three-volume EA document -- a development that necessitated the compilation of the new Addendum document and the gathering of public comment on the new project material.

Hearing process outline

Thursday's hearing will enable the public to provide comment openly or in private. Comments may be made verbally or through written submittals.

The core element of Thursday's session will be a hearing conducted by a moderator.

Prior to the gathering of public testimony, a Commission representative will make a welcoming statement and a member of the project team will give a brief presentation about the project. A stenographer will take a record of the proceedings.

An additional stenographer will be available to take testimony from individuals who wish to submit verbal statements privately rather than in front of an audience.

The public also may submit written testimony to a stenographer or a member of the project team

Finally, attendees may fill out comment cards to be made available at a written comment station that will be set up for the event.

Attendees wishing to provide verbal testimony will first need to register at the designated sign-in table.

Elected officials will be called to the podium first. Additional speakers will be called to the podium in the order in which they registered.

Verbal testimony will be limited to five minutes as a matter of fairness so everyone may have an opportunity to speak. Written testimony also may be submitted to supplement verbal testimony or in place of verbal testimony. Individuals with written testimony should submit it at the stenographer's table or hand it to a project staff person.

This public hearing segment is strictly for taking testimony on the EA Addendum. There will be no cross-examinations, questioning or responses to any speaker either from the floor or the chair. The hearing is intended to be the public's opportunity to be heard on the new environmental documentation. This will enable a public record to be gathered on the effect of the proposed project action.

After the public hearing portion of the review process comes to a close on Thursday night, motorists, residents, and other concerned parties who wish to provide comment may utilize one of the following options no later than the end of the comment period on January 3, 2012:

- E-mail – ScudderfallsbridgeEAcomments@hntb.com
- U.S. Mail – Send to Kevin Skeels, Senior Program Area Manager, DRJTBC, 110 Wood and Grove Streets, Morrisville, PA 19067.

Viewing/downloading the EA Addendum

The easiest way for area residents, motorists or other interested parties to review the EA Addendum documentation is to go to the Web site – www.scudderfallsbridge.com -- the Commission created in October 2003 to keep the public informed of project developments.

Copies of the document also will be available for viewing at the following six locations:

- Lower Makefield Township Municipal Building, 1100 Edgewood Road, Yardley, PA. 19067;
- Ewing Township's Municipal Clerk's Office, 2 Jake Garzio Drive, Ewing, N.J. 08628;
- The Yardley-Makefield branch of the Bucks County Free Library, 1080 Edgewood Road, Lower Makefield Township, PA .19067;
- The Mercer County Library – Ewing Branch, 61 Scotch Road Ewing, N.J. 08628;
- The DRJTBC's Administration Building at 110 Wood & Grove Streets Morrisville, PA. 19067; and
- PennDOT District 6, 7000 Geerdes Boulevard, King of Prussia, PA. 19406.

Latest step

The public hearing on the EA Addendum is the latest step in a process that began two years ago with the release of the original 561-page EA document.

The Addendum explains how the cashless tolling system for the Scudder Falls Bridge will work and it evaluates the traffic diversions and impacts associated with the tolling, including aesthetics, air quality, noise, environmental justice and cultural resources.

The Commission plans to use an all-electronic cashless tolling system – no toll booths – to collect revenue from motorists travelling southbound across the bridge. An overhead gantry of near-infrared lights, high-resolution cameras and toll-tag readers will be used to identify vehicles travelling at highway speeds. Such gantries are increasingly being used by toll agencies nationally and internationally to collect tolls while avoiding the congestion drawbacks of conventional toll plazas.

The recommended method of toll paying would be through E-ZPass. Non-E-ZPass customers would be billed by mail through the video capture of license plates. An administrative fee would be attached to each non-E-ZPass transaction. Non-E-ZPass customers who pre-register their license plates with the Commission would be charged lower fees than customer who do not register their license plates.

The Commission has not determined what toll rates or the schedule of administrative fees will be for the new bridge. The administrative fees for non-E-Z Pass customers are necessary because the cost to the Commission to collect video tolls is significantly higher than the cost to collect tolls via E-ZPass. The fees help offset the cost of looking up the information, printing and mailing the statement and any subsequent actions needed to recover the toll.

Analyses conducted prior to the issuance of the Addendum concluded that up to 84 percent of customers at the new bridge would be E-ZPass users. The Addendum states that the Commission will conduct E-ZPass sign-up efforts in the region prior to implementation of tolling at the bridge.

Project background

The I-95/Scudder Falls Bridge Improvement Project is the most expansive single capital initiative to date in the Commission's 76-year history.

The project area extends 4.4 miles along I-95 from PA Route 332 in Bucks County, PA to Bear Tavern Road in Mercer County, N.J. The project includes replacement of the existing functionally obsolete four-lane Scudder Falls Bridge with new twin structures -- one on the upstream side of the existing bridge and the other in the existing bridge's footprint.

The new structures will have six lanes of through traffic (three in each direction) with two auxiliary northbound lanes for entry/exit travel and one auxiliary southbound lane for entry/exit travel. The project calls for full inside and outside roadway shoulders on the bridge crossing to handle breakdowns and emergencies. The two inside shoulder lanes would have the capacity to serve future bus/rapid-transit routes.

The project includes safety upgrades to the two highway interchanges at both ends of the bridge, widening of I-95 to the inside from the bridge to Route 332 in Pennsylvania, and construction of a multi-use pedestrian/bicycle facility on the bridge's upstream span.

For more information, individuals should access the project Web site -- www.scudderfallsbridge.com -- or call the project hotline telephone number at 1-800-879-0849.

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 more than 139 million cars and trucks in 2010. For more information about the Commission and its various initiatives to deliver safer and more convenient bridge travel for its customers, please see: www.drjtb.org.

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