

Casey, Fetterman, Cartwright, and Wild Press PennDOT and National Park Service to Reopen Route 611

By Congresswoman Susan Wild

HARRISBURG - Road forced to close in December of 2022 due to rockslide; kept closed by lack of coordination between the two agencies

"The inability to find a path forward on the part of the two agencies has kept the road closed for over a year and become a burden on residents, businesses, commuters, and emergency vehicles," the members wrote in a letter

Washington, D.C. – Today, U.S. Senators Bob Casey (D-PA) and John Fetterman (D-PA), and U.S. Representatives Matt Cartwright (D-PA-8) and Susan Wild (D-PA-7) sent a letter to National Park Service Director Charles F. Sams III and Pennsylvania Secretary of Transportation Mike Carroll regarding the ongoing closure of Route 611 in Pennsylvania's Northampton and Monroe Counties. In the letter, the members expressed frustration about how a lack of coordination between the two agencies has led to the road being closed for more than a year, and called for a compromise solution to reopen the road.

"The inability to find a path forward on the part of the two agencies has kept the road closed for over a year and become a burden on residents, businesses, commuters, and emergency vehicles that have had to follow detours around the closure," wrote the members. "We emphasize our collective frustration over this situation and request both PennDOT and NPS come together and find a compromise that satisfies NPS's statutory requirements, prioritizes safety, and reopens Route 611."

Dear Director Sams and Secretary Carroll:

We write today regarding the ongoing closure of Route 611 in Northampton and Monroe Counties, Pennsylvania. This situation has been at a standstill for over a year, and we request your cooperation in seeking a solution as soon as you are able.

As you both know, Route 611 has been closed since December of 2022 after heavy rains led to a rockslide along Mount Minsi, which blocked the road. Since then, the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT) has been advancing plans to secure the rock face and reopen the road, which requires an Emergency Special Use Permit from the National Park Service (NPS).


We understand that NPS has yet to issue this Emergency Special Use Permit, citing its obligation to adhere to requirements set forth by the National Environmental Policy Act, the National Historic Preservation Act, the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, and the U.S. Department of Transportation Act of 1966, as well as concerns with the proposed scope of work. Without the Emergency Special Use Permit, PennDOT has not been able to move forward with the planned course of action it has deemed necessary to reopen the road. The inability to find a path forward on the part of the two agencies has kept the road closed for over a year and become a burden on residents, businesses, commuters, and emergency vehicles that have had to follow detours around the closure.

While we recognize the statutory limitations both parties must navigate, this impasse cannot continue. The Route 611 closure contributes to regional frustrations with government parties seeming unwilling to work together or compromise.


To that end, we emphasize our collective frustration over this situation and request both PennDOT and NPS come together and find a compromise that satisfies NPS's statutory requirements, prioritizes safety, and reopens Route 611.

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