



State Representative

TARAH PROBST

NEWS & EVENTS

District 189 | Monroe & Pike Counties

Probst, local leaders demand immediate pause on I-80 expansion project threatening wetlands, wildlife, and cultural heritage

Rep. Tarah Probst

STROUDSBURG, May 7 – In response to PennDOT's ongoing plans to widen Interstate 80 through parts of Monroe County, state Rep. Tarah Probst today joined local residents and experts to demand a full halt to construction planning in sensitive areas near Bryant Street.

Probst said the proposed expansion threatens a critical vernal pool ecosystem, precontact cultural sites, and dozens of homes.

"The I-80 expansion as currently designed is not sustainable, not community-centered, and not acceptable," Probst said. "We must take a pause and re-evaluate this project before irreparable harm is done."

A recent Wetland and Waters Delineation Report confirmed the existence of a primary vernal pool in the construction path — a seasonal wetland that supports crayfish, skunk cabbage, salamanders, and potentially state-tracked species like the Jefferson salamander and Wood Turtle.

The report also highlighted historical erosion from stormwater runoff and possible links between the wetland and McMichael Creek's floodplain. Additionally, trees older than the town of Stroudsburg itself thrive on the vernal pool's banks, in part due to the nurturing environment of that land.

"Vernal pools are ecological powerhouses," said Larry Kopp, Stroudsburg Borough Manager. "They provide breeding grounds for amphibians and filter water naturally. Once a pool like this is filled in or disrupted, it's gone forever. No mitigation plan can undo that."

The project area also includes lands with documented precontact archaeological sites carbon dated back 5,000-7,000 years, raising concerns among residents and historians alike about the loss of Indigenous cultural heritage.

Dwayne Reish, a lifelong Bryant Street resident was blunt in his assessment: "They want to punch an even bigger hole through the lungs of this neighborhood. We've lived with the noise and pollution of I-80 for decades. This project doesn't fix anything — it just digs the wound deeper. The vernal pool is sacred ground, not an afterthought. PennDOT is not going to steamroll this community without a fight."

Probst is calling for:

A moratorium on all further engineering work in the impacted wetlands and historic zones.

A third-party full environmental and cultural review, with community oversight.

Public hearings and full transparency in planning.

A redesign that centers ecological preservation and neighborhood impact.

"Stroudsburg is not just a pass-through," Probst said. "It's a living place with history, beauty, and voices that matter. PennDOT must come back to the table — and this time, listen."



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Recovery Revolution's Annual Walk

The 2025 Highmark Walk for a Healthy Community will take place on **Saturday, May 31st, 2025** at **DeSales University**. **Participants can look forward to:** URL: <http://hcf.convio.net/recoveryrev>

- A beautiful day! The walk will be held rain or shine.
- A walkway accessible for strollers and wheelchairs.
- Food, beverages, music, activities, and prizes.
- A chance to win Gift Card prizes for every participant who raises \$50 or more in support of a participating organization, you will receive one raffle ticket.
- For every \$50 raised, one additional chance will be awarded. Prizes will be drawn at the end of the campaign.
- Prizes will be mailed directly to winners.
- Receive a Highmark Walk for a Healthy Community T-shirt if you donate or raise \$30 or more for a participating organization. T-shirts will be distributed on event day (while supplies last).
- Suggested Donation \$20 per person and \$40 per family
- Donate at: <http://hcf.convio.net/recoveryrev>



Onsite Registration and Check-In begins at 7:45 a.m. 8:30am Opening Ceremonies begin. The 5K walk will start at 9:00 a.m. on the DeSales University & the One Mile Fun Walk begins at 9:15 a.m. Please fill out the form below.

____ Walker ____ Virtual Walker (Can't attend but would like to support)

First Name: _____ Last Name: _____

Email: _____ Password: _____

If no email, please supply a Username: _____

Phone: _____ Phone Type: Home or Cell

Address: _____ City: _____

State: _____ Zip Code: _____ DOB: _____ Gender: _____

T-shirt Size: Small Medium Large X-Large XX Large

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