

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

All Letters To The Editor Must Have Name, Address, Phone # And Be Signed To Be Printed In This Column.
Only The Name and City Will Be Printed.

Reader has issues with Corridor K

Letter to the Editor

In June of 2008, officials with the TN and NC Departments of Transportation released a draft stating their intent to construct a new highway, deemed "Corridor K," through the Stecoah Gap and across the Appalachian Trail. Part of the proposal calls for expanding U.S. Route 64 through the Cherokee National Forest (TN) and U.S. Route 74 between Stecoah and Robbinsville (NC), into a four-lane highway. The road would gash through the Cherokee and Nantahala National Forests.

Congressman Zach Wamp advocates a Corridor K/Highway 64 bypass in Polk County, with a whopping projected cost of 23 billion dollars, twenty percent of which would have to come from The Tennessee budget.

Construction of the roadway would remove a vast amount of forest. Corridor K would destroy a southern treasure, replacing part of our mountains with asphalt, concrete and pollution. Tennessee and North Carolina are perhaps best known for their natural beauty, including the public Cherokee and Nantahala National Forests. Visitors to the area, who contribute to the local economy, will begin to diminish upon the construction of this new highway, finding other areas to fulfill their recreational needs.

In addition, Corridor K would have a detrimental effect on the animals and plants in the area. The 2003 Draft Environmental impact Statement, developed for the Tennessee portion of Corridor K, indicated that 35+ rare species could have moderate to very high possibilities of being affected by this project.

Those who are pushing Corridor K emphasize the new road is necessary for the safety of travelers and rapid truck transports. Slight modifications to the current road alignments could improve the safety of the road without harmfully impacting the surrounding wilderness and neighboring Hiwassee watershed, in 2004 TDOT and state legislators recommended straightening several curves in the 16-mile stretch of U.S. 64, at a cost of roughly \$19 million, but that project was stalled. However, if they are so caught up in "fixing" this road, maybe this idea should be reconsidered instead of spending billions on a new highway.

The timing for proposing Corridor K is ghastly. We are in an economic downturn, Tennessee's seasonally adjusted unemployment rate for the month of December was 10.9 percent. Our college students are graduating after years of working toward a degree to become a statistic: unemployed. We continue to place more money into education funds, encouraging children to go to college when we now cannot guarantee them a steady job or even any job once they graduate.

We need to place our attention on our own economy. The United States lost 23 million jobs as a result of the trade imbalance with China between 2001-2007. In order to improve our nation, we have to first decrease our own unemployment rate and stop sending an outsourcing of jobs to countries like China and India. Mother highway will not solve this problem. Instead of spending billions on Corridor K, we should use that money to generate jobs for locals. By bringing manufacturing companies to our region, we could decrease the unemployment rate in our country.

"The struggle to save the global environment is in one way much more difficult than the struggle to vanquish Hitler, for this time the war is with ourselves. We are the enemy, just as we have only ourselves as allies," Al Gore said. Please contact your elected officials. If we wish to save our mountain region, we are going to have to bind together and fight for it. Everyone has a voice. Please raise yours.

Jessi Cross
Tellico Plains, TN

Create and Keep Jobs in U.S.

Letter to the Editor:

President Obama is promoting a new \$300 billion economic stimulus program. When he took office in January 2009 he said the \$787 billion stimulus program will CREATE 3.5 million jobs by the end of 2010 and unemployment will remain below 8.0%. Unemployment is hovering around 10.0%, and the jobs promised by Obama might hit 1.5 million by the end of 2010, but during the last 13 months we lost 5 million jobs.

The stimulus saved the jobs of municipal workers, and provided additional unemployment benefits, but it has not provided jobs in the private sector. The money went to government agencies, colleges, non-profit organizations and entitlement programs. These programs will generate annual deficits of \$1 trillion to \$1.5 trillion for years to come. Our government has squandered our financial resources on failed economic programs, and the American work force continues to suffer.

The domestic priority should be creating millions of new jobs, and other domestic initiatives, including health care reform, should wait until the economy improves.

The Administration and Congress have to reduce the size of government; cut business taxes; and give U.S. companies incentives to operate in this country, and disincentives to move operations and jobs overseas.

Donald A. Moskowitz
Londonderry, NH

Scrutinize defense spending

Letter to the Editor

Defense spending is by far the largest expenditure of our federal government, and it's increasing every year. The Defense budget represents about half of all U.S. discretionary spending. Our Defense appropriations exceed the total amount of defense spending by all other nations in the world -- combined! Defense spending is one of the largest contributors to our huge deficits.

We are embroiled in two wars, racking up deficits, and Americans are not willing to pay for them by having their taxes increased. We can't have it both ways; either we pay for our wars, or we incur further deficits.

The U.S. no longer can be the world's sole policeman. It will take the combined efforts of all civilized nations to help stamp out terrorism throughout the world.

The Defense Budget is a 'sacred cow' that few legislators seem willing to trim because they will almost certainly be labeled as being soft on defense -- or even worse, 'unpatriotic'.

There is always fat and waste that can be trimmed in any budget. Defense Department budgets should receive the same scrutiny as any other department of our government and should not be immune from legitimate cuts in unnecessary, wasteful spending.

Paul G. Jaehnert
Vadnais Hts, MN.

Got Something To Say? The People News Gives You A Voice!
Write To Us! Comments Will Be Appreciated, But If You
Want Them Published, You Will Need To Identify Yourself.
E-mail: thepeoplenews@aol.com ~ Online: www.ThePeopleNews.com