



Public Interest Center | P.O. Box 1049 | Columbus, OH | 43216-1049

**FOR RELEASE:** March 2, 2012  
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## **Ohio EPA Accepts Public Comments About ODOT's Proposed Portsmouth Bypass in Scioto County**

Ohio EPA will hold a public information session and hearing at 6 p.m. on March 15, 2012, regarding the water quality impacts of a proposed Portsmouth Bypass – a three-mile stretch of limited access highway in Scioto County that would be part of the Appalachian Development Highway system. The meeting will be held at Portsmouth High School, 1225 Gallia St.

The Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT) is proposing the project to improve local roads, travel time, public safety and regional mobility, allowing motorists to avoid traffic congestions.

The first phase of the four-lane project would be constructed from the TR 234 (Shumway Hollow Rd.) Interchange near the Scioto County Airport to an interchange at CR 28 (Lucasville-Minford Rd.). This phase would include four bridges and two interchanges, namely:

- TR 234 (Shumway Hollow Rd.)/SCI-823 interchange;
- CR 28 (Lucasville-Minford Rd.)/SCI-823 interchange;
- bridge over Swauger Valley-Minford Rd. and Harrison Furnace Creek; and
- bridge over Portsmouth-Minford Rd. (SR 139) and Long Run Creek.

Upon completion of this phase of the project, the roadway would be open to local traffic and provide a direct connection between CR 228 and SR 335.

Discharges from the construction and development activities, if approved, would result in lowering the water quality of streams, wetlands, ditches and ponds in the Little Scioto River watershed. ODOT's preferred alternative, if approved, would impact approximately 9,525 feet of streams, 3.9 acres of wetlands and 2.7 acres of ponds. ODOT would be required to offset any impacts resulting from the project. Ohio EPA also will consider other alternatives that result in lesser or no impacts to water quality.

The federal Clean Water Act requires anyone discharging dredged or fill material into Ohio waters to obtain a Section 401 water quality certification from Ohio EPA and Section 404 permit from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Ohio EPA received a Section 401 certification application for this project. The Agency's review is to ensure the project will comply with Ohio's water quality standards.

The project may result in a change from current water quality conditions but cannot violate standards that protect human health and the environment. Ohio EPA will review the application and the technical, economic, social and environmental aspects of the project before making a decision.

Ohio EPA places a high priority on public involvement and encourages citizens to become involved in the decision-making process. During the March 15 information session, representatives from Ohio EPA will explain the proposed project and answer questions. During the hearing, which immediately follows the information session, the public can submit comments for the record regarding the application. The purpose of the hearing is to obtain additional information that will be considered before Ohio EPA issues or denies the certification.

In addition to oral comments provided at the public meeting, Ohio EPA will accept and equally consider written comments received through March 22. Written comments can be mailed to Ohio EPA-Division of Surface Water, Attention: Permits Processing Unit, P.O. Box 1049, Columbus, Ohio 43216-1049. Interested parties also may request to be placed on a mailing list for information by writing to the same address.

The application and other related materials are available for review at Ohio EPA, Division of Surface Water, Lazarus Government Center, 50 W. Town St., Suite 700, Columbus by first calling (614) 644-2001.