

October 20, 2003

Ms. Mary Peters, Administrator
Federal Highway Administration
400 Seventh Street, SW Suite 4218
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Administrator Peters:

I am writing to you regarding an important issue of public safety and economic development in the Huntington area of Long Island. Specifically, I would like to request you issue a waiver from FHWA regulations that prevent the use of highway rest stops located on federal highways for non-rest stop related purposes. The Long Island Convention and Visitor's Bureau (LICVB), the New York State DOT and the Suffolk County Highway Patrol (SCHP) have teamed up to design and build a new facility on the Long Island Expressway (I-495) between exits 51 and 52. Currently on this site the LICVB has a retired railroad car from which they provide visitor and tourist information for Long Island. This facility is substandard and needs to be replaced.

The new facility planned for this site by the NYS DOT will house both an expanded and upgraded visitor and tourist facility, as well as a new Highway Patrol facility and the administrative offices of the LICVB and Highway Patrol. Allowing the administrative offices of both these organizations to be located at this new facility will allow the LICVB to staff the tourist center with a far higher level of staffing than the existing facility and allow the SCHP to provide 24 hour security. If the SCHP and the LICVB are not allowed to locate their administrative staff at this facility, the cost will increase dramatically for both organizations and make the project unworkable.

Therefore I urge you to issue a waiver to allow this construction to move forward as soon as possible. This new facility will provide substantial benefits to the community as well as the Long Island Expressway which outweigh any negatives due to the siting of a building on the interstate right of way. If you have any further questions, please contact Jonathan Flaherty on my staff at 202.224.4960.

Sincerely ,



Charles E. Schumer
United States Senator