



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
October 20, 2022

Governor Wolf, President Biden Visit Fern Hollow Bridge, Emphasize Importance of Infrastructure Funding

Harrisburg, PA – Governor Tom Wolf joined President Biden at the Fern Hollow Bridge in Pittsburgh today to highlight the importance of investing in infrastructure and the impacts of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law on Pennsylvania's transportation network.

The Fern Hollow Bridge, which is owned by the City of Pittsburgh and carries Forbes Avenue over Frick Park, Fern Hollow Creek and Tranquil Trail, collapsed on the morning of January 28, 2022. The cause of the collapse is still under investigation by the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB).

"The collapse of the Fern Hollow Bridge was a visceral reminder that Pennsylvania, like many states, is in a race against time to repair aging infrastructure," said Gov. Wolf. "This problem isn't unique to our state, but we need solutions urgently – because our communities deserve to know that they can rely on the safety of the bridges, roads and other infrastructure they use every single day."

Immediately following the collapse, Gov. Wolf and Mayor Gainey issued Declaration of Disaster Emergency Proclamations, which allowed the City of Pittsburgh to enter into a legal agreement to allow the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT) to manage the design and construction of the new Fern Hollow Bridge. The proclamations also provided the Federal Highway Administration and PennDOT the approval to immediately contract with Swank Construction Company and HDR Inc. for the removal of the collapsed structure, and the design and construction of the new Fern Hollow Bridge.

Thanks to collaboration with the City of Pittsburgh and PennDOT's innovative approach to the standard design process, multiple design phases occurred simultaneously including foundation, substructure, superstructure, utility relocation, environmental and aesthetic aspects of the project, which allowed project delivery to be expedited by multiple years. The bridge is expected to open to traffic by the end of 2022 – less than a year after the collapse.

Substructure and superstructure work have been completed on the new bridge, and concrete deck placement work is expected to conclude by late October. Bridge barrier installation, the

completion of abutment and wingwalls, and roadway tie-ins to the bridge are anticipated to be finished by late December to allow the bridge to open to a single-lane of bi-directional traffic while work continues into early 2023.

The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL), signed by President Biden in November 2021, allowed PennDOT to quickly dedicate \$25.3 million in federal funds to the project without impacting other critical regional needs.

“Without the new BIL funds, we would have been scrambling to find the money to quickly replace the Fern Hollow Bridge, and other important projects would have been impacted,” said Gov. Wolf. “There’s no question that these new funds have been a gamechanger for Pennsylvania, not only for this project, but across the commonwealth.

“This is the power of federal infrastructure investments in Pennsylvania. At the site of a tragedy that took place less than 8 months ago, we now have a bridge that is nearing completion. Those federal dollars will also help us speed up other repair and replacement projects across the commonwealth, so we can keep more Pennsylvanians safer, support more union jobs, and ensure that Pennsylvania’s infrastructure can stand up to our 21st century needs.”

The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law will bring \$4 billion in new highway and bridge funds to Pennsylvania over the next five years, nearly \$600 million in this federal fiscal year alone. These new funds have allowed many important transportation projects to advance across Pennsylvania.

Information on the construction of the new Fern Hollow Bridge can be found on [PennDOT's website](#). To learn more about transportation investments across Pennsylvania, visit projects.PennDOT.gov.

Governor Wolf has served for two terms as a leader consistently at work for the people of Pennsylvania. Learn more about how his [Priorities for Pennsylvania](#) have fueled the commonwealth’s comeback, leaving Pennsylvania in a much better place than when he arrived.

MEDIA CONTACT: Elizabeth Rementer, ra-gvgovpress@pa.gov, 717-783-1116

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