

**DOYLE HEFFLEY, MEMBER
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House of Representatives

Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
Harrisburg

AMERICAN LEGION BUILDING
3 WEST RIDGE STREET
LANSFORD, PA 18232
WEDNESDAY 10 A.M. TO 2 P.M.

WEATHERLY BOROUGH OFFICE
10 WILBUR ST.
WEATHERLY, PA 18255
THURSDAY 10 A.M. TO 2 P.M.

COMMITTEES:
GAME AND FISHERIES
HUMAN SERVICES
TRANSPORTATION
TOURISM

October 30th, 2018

Secretary Richards:

For several months, I have been outspoken about the poor road conditions on State Route 248. This route, the main thoroughfare connecting Carbon County to the Lehigh Valley, has been under construction since early spring, and has not been worked on since June. Considering that road and bridge construction can only be done during certain months of the year, the fact that the contractor has left the worksite unchanged for the last four months of the year in which construction can occur, is unsettling to say the least.

While motorists remain frustrated over prolonged construction projects far exceeding the expected completion date, concerns have now become safety-related. Inevitably, snow and sleet will begin to fall soon, as it does every year. If you would, can you please provide answers to the following questions, so that I may share this information with the concerned citizens of the 122nd Legislative District:

- What will be done about the several foot gap in-between the bridge and the earth? It appears that a car, or truck, could easily slide off the road in poor weather/visibility and be subject to much greater harm than would normally be expected.
- What will happen when the snow removal trucks come through and bury the orange construction markers (traffic channelizers), limiting the awareness of the motorists to proceed under caution?
- As I had been assured, on numerous occasions, this project was supposed to have been completed in October. Then, the completion date was pushed back to November. Realistically, what is PennDOT's plan to control and address this project during the winter months?

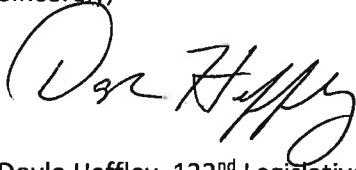
While I have dire safety concerns, I am also troubled in relation to the contract that was awarded for this project. It is unacceptable to change traffic patterns, create congestion, and pose a safety concern to motorists over a four-month time period where no work has been completed. My questions regarding the contract awarded for this project are as follows:

- What is the reason behind the delay in the completion of the contract and will the contractor be held financially, or otherwise, responsible?
- Who wrote this specific contract?
 - Was it negotiated? If so, who was a part of those discussions?
- Who approved this specific contract and awarded this project to this construction firm?
- How does the Department address contractors that have overextend themselves across numerous projects around the Commonwealth, and do not finish them on time?

Unfortunately, as my concerns have fallen onto deaf ears, I will take my call for answers to the media. While I take no pleasure in publicly addressing my concerns, I represent the people of the 122nd District, and they are disappointed. As am I.

Accountability and transparency have been the self-proclaimed hallmarks of Governor Wolf's tenure over the Commonwealth. Today, I call on PennDOT to address these concerns, and to ensure those within the District that their state departments still work for them; The People.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Doyle Heffley", written in a cursive style.

Doyle Heffley, 122nd Legislative District
State Representative

CC: Leslie S. Richards

George W. McAuley, Jr., P.E.

James D. Ritzman, P.E.

Michael Rebert

Route 248 work to finish in November



A view of the construction area on Route 248 near Palmerton. Work is expected to finish in November. BOB FORD/TIMES NEWS

Published July 27, 2018 12:50PM

By Chris Reber creber@tnonline.com

A bridge project that has frustrated drivers traveling south of Palmerton will be completed in November, according to the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation.

The bridge carrying Route 248 over Norfolk Southern Rail lines has been under construction for some time.

A PennDOT contractor has been repairing the substructure and deck of the span, which was built in 1962. The cost of the project is approximately \$1.1 million, and it is part of a larger contract to fix 13 bridges in Carbon, Schuylkill and Monroe counties over a three-year period, according to PennDOT.

Some drivers have complained about lane restrictions and the appearance that no one is working on the bridge.

PennDOT spokesman Sean Brown said crews are currently awaiting delivery of expansion dams which will be installed in the next two weeks. Expansion dams are the metal sections on each side of the bridge which allow the concrete to expand and contract with the weather.

However, Brown said, there are other days where it seems like no one is working on the bridge, but work is taking place out of drivers' sight.

"There are days they have been working underneath the bridge that gives the appearance that the contractor is not working on the project," Brown said.

Brown said that by mid-September, the contractor will complete work on one direction of the bridge. That involves paving and replacing the expansion dams.

Traffic will then be rerouted to the other side of the bridge, and the same process will take place on the other half.

The contractor for the project is Kriger Construction Inc., of Scranton, who won a \$5.9 million contract to replace 13 bridges in the area — three in Carbon County, six in Monroe County and four in Schuylkill.

The project officially began in August 2016 and Brown said bridges are bid as a package because it is more efficient.

"We 'bundle' bridges in these contracts because much of the preventive maintenance work required on each bridge is similar and it does make both fiscal and time frame sense to package these together," Brown said.