

Supervisors consider supporting Devil's Tea Table landmark

Excerpted from **Bucks County Herald** story covering May 3rd Solebury Township Board of Supervisors meeting.

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By **Birgitta Wolfe**

" In other business, the supervisors heard from Stephen Freeman of the Devil's Tea Table Alliance (DTTA). The group started in 2021 and has more than 600 participants. The Devil's Tea Table is a rock formation high above the Delaware River in Hunterdon County, N.J., part of the view from Solebury, Tincum and Plumstead townships.

The arguments around the Devil's Tea Table are growing more tense as Route 29 municipalities and some Bucks County residents on the other side of the river fight N.J. Department of Transportation (NJDOT) plans to encase the cliffs along the road in wire to protect drivers from falling rocks.

The NJDOT project would cost \$20 million for the Lambertville-West Amwell section and \$33 million mostly in federal funds for the Kingwood area, Freeman said.

But a recent Open Public Records request revealed "NJDOT has no records of accident or injuries from rockfall incidents in the impacted area to justify the project" along the 3 miles of Route 29 in Kingwood, including the Devil's Tea Table area, Freeman reported.

DTTA is requesting river communities, including Solebury, to oppose the venture in hopes state and federal legislators will take note.

Baum Baicker said Solebury will discuss the issue with its solicitor, Mark Freed, before issuing a statement.

So far, those issuing resolutions against the project are Kingwood Township, Hunterdon County, Frenchtown, Tincum Township in Bucks County, Stockton and Plumstead. Issuing letters of concern are the Lower Delaware Wild and Scenic Partnership and the Tribal Council of the Lenape Nation of Pennsylvania.

The DTTA's stated goal is to get New Jersey and the federal government "to pause the current project and more meaningfully involve local elected officials...in evaluating the best and least destructive options to reasonably minimize any real rockfall risks . And to assure that thorough independent environmental, historical and archeological impact studies are conducted. All things not done to date."

The group lists the NJDOT undertaking to include: widespread tree removal, blasting much of the rockface, rock removal, installing metal mesh or draping materials to the rockface, create a new barrier or a "catchment ditch," apply concrete (shotcrete) to the smoothed rockface around and including the Devil's Tea Table geologic structure, and disrupt the flow of three stream tributaries to the Delaware River."