

PRESS RELEASE

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CABOL¹ (Citizens Against the Beltway Orange Location)

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CABOL has recently received a report from a nationally recognized air quality consultant² who was asked to analyze the potential long-term impacts to the public health related to TDOT's proposed Knoxville Parkway Orange Route. (A copy of the report is attached). The expert reports that since the proposed Orange Route will pass through four valleys which will trap pollutants, the adverse health consequences, especially for children, will be extreme. The Knox County School Board and parents whose students may be being zoned to attend the new Harden Valley High School should be very concerned about the report's conclusions. The expert concluded in part: "a new corridor of increased cancer, asthma and other adverse risks will be created along the Orange Route."

CABOL has provided the expert's report to Governor Bredesen and TDOT, asking them to reconsider the Orange Route selection, and has placed the state on notice of the potential liability if this route is constructed. (See attached letter). CABOL has also provided the report to the Executive Board of the Knoxville Regional Transportation Planning Organization (TPO), to members of the Knox County Legislative Delegation, and to others, asking for their support in opposing the Orange Route selection. (See attached letter).

CABOL is hopeful that the Governor will intervene to require TDOT to rethink this corridor selection, provide a safer transportation alternative (possibly something other than a new highway), and stop wasting public funds on what will become "a ... corridor of increased cancer, asthma and other adverse risks" CABOL is also hopeful that the Knox County delegation and the TPO will support its sincere appeal to protect citizens and children who will unnecessarily be exposed to harm if the Orange Route is constructed.³

1 CABOL is a Tennessee not for profit corporation comprised of citizens who desire to protect the citizens and children who will be unnecessarily exposed to harm if the Orange Route is constructed. www.nobeltway.com

2 Timothy Quarles, an air quality consultant with 30 years of experience, has a Bachelor of Science in Environmental Science from Vanderbilt University, and a Masters degree in Chemical Engineering (Atmospheric Chemistry emphasis) from Washington State University. He is very familiar with the Knoxville area and surrounding terrain.

3 Following are some additional excerpts from the expert's report (footnotes omitted and emphasis added):

Knoxville already has a very high rate of childhood asthma, and is already considered one of the worst places for an asthmatic to live. Those living along the proposed Orange Route can expect to see a rise in the incidences of asthma. High levels of pollutants near the Orange Route are to be expected due to the number of vehicles, especially heavy duty trucks, that the Orange Route is designed to attract.

...
The Orange Route will pass nearby four (4) existing or planned elementary schools, high schools, and colleges with a student population of over 11,000 students. In addition, the Orange Route will be located near many existing neighborhoods and will certainly attract new ones. Total population exposed to this increased risk of cancer and leukemia is unknown but will be significant.

...
It is also clear from the evidence above, and from the region's known meteorological and topographical conditions which act to severely limit the region's atmosphere to disperse pollutants, that a new corridor of increased cancer, asthma, and other adverse health effect risks will be created along the Orange Route. These special conditions are discussed next.



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... [A] significant portion of the Orange Route corridor is located in valleys, whose dispersion characteristics are poor to begin with. Combined with the region's notoriously poor atmospheric dispersion characteristics, these valleys will see significant degradation of air quality to unhealthy levels, especially so in congested areas.

Each of the valleys, through which the Orange Route is proposed, will act very efficiently to trap vehicle emissions.

5.2 Unacceptable Adverse Health Impacts to Exposed Population, Schools and School Children

The Orange Route will pass adjacent to four current or planned schools with a student population of over 11,000, including Hardin Valley Elementary (680 students), Pellissippi College (8,000 students), a proposed Hardin Valley High School (2,100 students), and Claxton Elementary (550 students). Adverse health impacts, including an increase in the number of cases of childhood asthma in students attending these schools will be significant. Numerous studies discussed in this report clearly document the significant health effects to children associated with exposure to mobile source air pollutants. Locating a major multilane highway with substantial diesel truck traffic near schools will result in significant exposure to elevated levels of toxic air pollutants, including diesel exhaust, with documented adverse health effects.

The East Tennessee region was found to have one of the highest incidences of low level inversions, and one of the lowest average wind speeds in the country. These facts, combined with the Orange Route's location through a series of valleys, and the high numbers of vehicles and heavy duty diesel trucks expected to use the Orange Route, means that high concentrations of air pollutants will occur and significant negative impacts to human health will result from the Orange Route Parkway project.

An increase in the incidences of various cancers and childhood asthma can be expected to occur. Significant health effects to children associated with exposure to mobile source air pollutants are known and are expected to occur since at least four schools will be located in close proximity to the Orange Route.