

September 29th, 2005
St-Constant, Quebec

218 P NP **DM3.1**

Projet de parachèvement de l'autoroute 30
entre l'autoroute 15 et l'échangeur Jean-Leman
à Candiac et à Saint-Philippe

Montréal

6211-06-075

BAPE
Jean-Leman Section of Autoroute 30

Members of the Committee,

Let me begin by saying that I am against constructing the Jean-Leman section of Autoroute 30.

My family and I have lived in St-Constant for eight years, and are extremely happy with the general peacefulness of this community.

There is everything we could want for ourselves and our children in this vibrant and diverse corner of the south shore.

The only drawback that has a noticeable effect on the lives of the people of St-Constant, Ste.Catherine, Delson, and Candiac is the endless congestion of Highway 132 which bisects this urban area.

It should be noted that this stretch of road is also extremely dangerous .

It is noisy, and choked with pollution through seven kilometres of red lights and bumper-to-bumper traffic.

This goes on for ten or twelve hours a day, seven days a week, twelve months of the year.

Having said this, you can understand my surprise when I read the report of the last public hearings to study this affair, which actually recommended constructing Autoroute 30 through the farmland south of St-Constant.

Given that the “Troncon Jean-Leman” is an extension of this already flawed logic, I must voice my extreme opposition to its construction.

The following are just a few of the reasons why this piece of highway should **NOT** be built.

The area in which the Jean-Leman section is supposed to pass is a beautiful piece of land, and vital to the quality of the local environment.

I realize that the mayor of Candiac has plans to develop this area someday, but we don't see the bulldozers yet, and for now it's a nice buffer between the city, the highways, and the countryside.

The forests, the wetlands, and the undisturbed aspect of this area are all things which are harder and harder to find this close to urban development.

Many people view such natural treasures as **raw materials**, to be exploited, paved, and built upon not realizing that the real treasure is in just leaving it alone.

Bricks and cement and asphalt do not filter our drinking water, nor purify the air we breathe, nor provide sanctuary to the thousands of creatures great and small which make up what we call biodiversity.

I realize that we cannot preserve everything, but we have an obligation to cooperate with nature wherever this is possible.

For too long we have wantonly exploited nature in the pursuit of money, and in the name of progress.

The time has come to say **NO** when a project destroys natural habitat strictly for the greed or convenience of a few ambitious developers, or short-sighted politicians.

For Autoroute 30, there **IS** a solution which provides for our needs while preserving the natural environment which surrounds us.

The MTQ already has an excellent proposal for the construction of Autoroute 30 over the existing right-of-way of the 132.

For more than thirty years the land has been expropriated along Highway 132 for an eventual multi-lane autoroute.

For all this time, the zoning, development, and infrastructure planning of four towns has been based on the **known location** of this all-important highway.

If you ask anyone who lives here, they will tell you that the 132 should have been ripped up and replaced by a real highway **decades ago**.

And when you take the time to explain to these people what the Liberal government plans to do with Autoroute 30, **they can't believe it !!!**

How does this plan benefit anyone who lives HERE ?

How does a highway with no local access help the 30,000 or more residents of our community who have to use the 132 every day ? They don't have any other road to use.

How does the creation of a second zone of noise and pollution make life better for any of us, especially when they have no intention of improving the 132 for another ten years ?

All of the merchants who set up a business, or families who bought a house along the 132 did so knowing, and probably even hoping that someday there would be a multi-lane Autoroute at their front door. Don't let any of them tell you otherwise.

The **original** plan introduced by the **last** government for the building of Autoroute 30 along the axis of the 132, was designed to provide for smooth traffic flow from all four towns, greatly reduced pollution, greatly reduced noise, as well as safe pedestrian access among the various communities.

AMAZING !!!! This is a great plan !!!!

You should watch the video the MTQ produced for this project.

It's the smartest urban highway I've ever seen, and the people who worked on putting all the various recommendations together should be very proud.

The will be no more congestion on the 132.

The grass-covered, angled sides of this new artery would cut down on noise and dust.

Overpasses at major intersections will make it safe and easy to cross from one town to the other.

And best of all, the farmers keep the land which they need so badly.

So it IS possible.

We **CAN** improve something which has a major impact on **our** quality of life, and still leave the farmland, forests, and rivers undisturbed.

THIS IS A WIN-WIN SITUATION.

Anyone who still believes that this highway should be built **anywhere else** but on the 132 has either never been here, or never will.

You just have to come and see the place, and you'll realize that sticking a four-lane highway out in the middle of a bunch of farmers fields just doesn't make any sense at all.

Take a look at the map. It makes a lot more sense for Autoroute 30 to follow its natural course ... a straight ahead line from Candiac to the other end of Ste-Catherine.

If the Troncon Jean-Leman is approved, thereby clearing the way for Autoroute 30 to be built across the south of St-Constant, what impact does this really have ?

First of all, it will destroy a small triangle of natural wilderness habitat of which we have so little left near Montreal.

The highway is **far** more important than a small patch of forest.

The next step will be to continue the highway south of St-Constant, destroying a lot of very good farmland.

The farmers use this land to grow food for their animals.

The highway is **far** more important than a few hundred acres of farmland.

So we build the highway across the fields, and as close as possible to the houses on the south side of town because the first BAPE said that this would help the farmers.

This is progress, and the highway is **far** more important than the quality of life of a few thousand people.

And so the 132 remains the polluted, congested, and dangerous road that nobody has bothered to fix for the last thirty years.

It is **far** better to create a second zone of pollution and noise where none existed before, destroy the quality of life of thousands of people, leave the 132 the way it is, and do irreparable damage to the environment.

Are the people who believe this really that blind ... or just selfish ?

THIS IS A LOSE-LOSE SITUATION.

The residents of the four surrounding communities get **nothing** out of this plan.

The 132 will **still** be a dangerous, noisy, and smelly **scab** of a highway cutting through and dividing these four towns.

And no **urban boulevard** is ever going to change it, even if it does actually get built someday.

The farmland will be lost forever, and we have precious little of it left in southern Quebec, as we continue to cover **thousands** of acres of green space with housing developments, shopping centres, and asphalt every single year.

Somewhere this has to stop.

Because most of all, the environment loses. And when the environment loses, **WE ALL LOSE.**

The few remaining green zones need our protection and they need it **now.**

We cannot keep cutting down the trees, filling in the swamps, and chasing away all the animals, and still expect the planet to survive.

We have eyes, and we have brains, and we can understand what this kind of “**progress**” is going to bring in the coming decades if we don’t start to change our ways.

In conclusion, let me say that the amount of money that one side or the other might quote as being the “**cost**” of this project does not really tell the **bigger** picture.

Money alone is not the only **cost** we have to consider, and that’s why we have these hearings.

When we start sacrificing the last remaining bits of forest and farmland for the sake of an **election promise**, then we are on **slippery ground indeed.**

These seemingly insignificant pieces of mother nature may not be worth a lot to some people today, but when they’re gone, they’re gone forever.

End of story.

This BAPE must do the right thing.

You must not compromise on the environment.

You must protect it.

You must not bend to political pressure.

You must stand firm by the true principles of sustainable development, knowing that we have already done a lot of damage.

Putting another highway through this or any green zone will be hard to justify to future generations.

Building it on the 132 would be a blessing.

The Jean-Leman proposal is a bad solution to an already ill-conceived project.

It is a waste of good land.

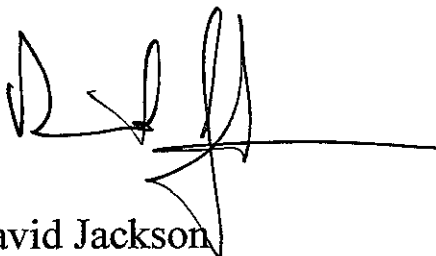
It is totally unnecessary.

And it is going to do serious harm to the environment for questionnable long-term benefits.

I implore you to recommend that this project be cancelled.

Thank you for giving every possible consideration to the arguments which I have presented.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'David Jackson', written over a horizontal line. The signature is stylized with loops and a long horizontal stroke.

David Jackson

St-Constant, Québec