

Murphy Calls for End to Federal Funds for Questionable I-84 Contractors

Congressman Chris Murphy (CT-5) called on the United States Secretary of Transportation to consider denying future federal contracts to the two companies responsible for the oversight lapses and construction failures along I-84 in Waterbury.

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WASHINGTON, D.C. – Congressman Chris Murphy (CT-5) called on the United States Secretary of Transportation to consider denying future federal contracts to the two companies responsible for the oversight lapses and construction failures along I-84 in Waterbury. The Federal Highway Administration is currently withholding the final \$5 million portion of its \$60 million allocation for the reconfiguration of I-84 because of the faulty work of now-defunct LG DeFelice, Inc., the company contracted with the project, and Maguire Group, Inc., the state-contracted inspection firm.

Noting the long history in Connecticut of questionable contractors folding their firms and reemerging under a new corporate identity, Murphy also asked the Secretary of Transportation to "consider whether any firms that employ former LG DeFelice principals should be eligible for federally funded contracts."

"Anyone that drives on I-84 between Cheshire and Waterbury has witnessed the effects of the gross mismanagement of this project. I-84 cuts through the heart of the Fifth District, serving cities and towns that are vital to our economy. The damage has been done, but we can stand up for ourselves by making sure that these companies don't have the opportunity to do this again," said Murphy.

In a letter to Secretary of Transportation Mary E. Peters, Murphy outlined the details of the situation and his concerns. Recent inspections of the 3-mile highway expansion have revealed that 90% of its roadway drainage system is seriously flawed; creating numerous potential underground washouts that could lead to the collapse of entire portions of the roadbed. Further errors identified thus far include two incorrectly constructed bridges and a highway access ramp, as well as a botched effort to locate an environmentally sensitive drainage area.

Adding to the failures of the work of these companies, the project has run over cost by 25.7% to date, totaling some \$13.4 million above the initial estimate – nearly double the amount considered routine for such cost overruns.

The federal government has yet to take final action in this case. Meanwhile, the residents of Connecticut are erroneously being held accountable, as the federal Highway Administration is withholding highway funds.

"The facts that have recently come to light regarding the conduct of these companies have given me serious reservations as to their competence and effectiveness. It pains me to learn that not only did these companies fail to complete what they were hired to do, they disregarded their budget limitations. The federal government should be holding the companies, not the residents of Connecticut, accountable. As the Governor and the State continue to sort out this mess, the federal government should take action," said Murphy.

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