

Once Again, Protect Our Bridge!

From: Preserve Westport (info@preservewestport.com)

To: normankramer@yahoo.com

Date: Friday, September 11, 2020, 09:00 AM EDT

The DOT is back!

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Cribari Bridge Preservation Alert: The DOT is back!

Cribari Bridge Supporters,

Three years ago, Westporters swamped local decision makers with letters requesting that our historic Cribari Bridge be saved. At that time, the CT Department of Transportation (DOT) wanted money set aside for the bridge BEFORE it would reveal to us what it intended to do to the bridge with that money.

Since the DOT has never been shy about its preference for replacing our beloved bridge with an enormous highway-style span (one that would allow 18 wheelers to access Saugatuck as an alternate I-95 route), we did not like the idea of just blindly handing the DOT a 40 million dollar blank check.

So, in order to send DOT the message that local control over the fate of our bridge was important, First [Selectman Marpe insisted](#) that the above mentioned money be removed from the DOT's planning budget. The vote was unanimous and, just like that, the DOT was stripped of its power over us.

Unbelievably, the DOT has returned yet again with the exact same request: *i.e. give us the money (40 dollars) and then we'll tell you what we're going to do to the bridge.*

Luckily, First [Selectman Marpe remains committed](#) to maintaining the things that make Westport a unique attractive community. That includes the Cribari Bridge -- now the oldest span of its type in the nation. But again, he needs our help to make the case that it is unacceptable to authorize funds for the Cribari Bridge without any indication of how that money will actually be used.

If we cannot control the funds, we cannot control our future. And if we leave our future in DOT's hands means the loss of a historic bridge and the arrival of massive trucks.

The upcoming funding vote on **Thursday, October 15th** is the *ONLY* time that the power to make a difference will be in our hands. So here's a quick and easy way to encourage Selectman Marpe and the other decision makers to take a strong, principled stand when they vote. Simply cut and paste the following letter (or your own) to these three recipients:

Plan@westcog.org

DOT.Draft2021STIPComment@ct.gov

JMarpe@westportct.gov

And please copy us at info@PreserveWestport.com

Dear Sir/Madam,

In response to your call for public comment, I wish to communicate my strong interest in the preservation of the Saugatuck Swing Bridge (a.k.a. Cribari Bridge) in Westport – now the nation's oldest, active bridge of its type. In addition to being an irreplaceable piece of America's engineering heritage, the bridge also functions as an effective calming and filtering device. Accordingly, I cannot support the inappropriate alteration or potential destruction of this valuable cultural resource and community asset.

*Therefore, I respectfully request that you vote to **REMOVE State Project 0158-0214 from the 2021-2024 State Transportation Improvement Fund.** The simple truth is that the Connecticut Department of Transportation needs to adhere to the recommendations stated in its own Historic Bridge Preservation Plan. It should not only restore this beloved icon but also maintain it with the kind of stewardship befitting a structure listed on the National Register of Historic Places.*

Thank you for your thoughtful consideration,

(Type your name and contact info here)

As ever, we remain committed to preserving the Cribari Bridge and the quality of life that it, in turn, safeguards. Thank you for your continuing support.

John F. Suggs

Helen Garten

Wendy Crowther

Morley Boyd

Westport Preservation Alliance



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