

THE ONLINE OFFICE OF CONGRESSMAN

**PAUL E. KANJORSKI**

REPRESENTING THE 11TH CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT OF PENNSYLVANIA



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## Kanjorski Officially Opens New Road at Francis E. Walter Dam, Increasing Dam's Capacity

**Bear Creek Township, Pa.** – Congressman Paul E. Kanjorski (PA-11) today joined State Rep. Keith McCall (D-122); Roy Denmark, Army Corps of Engineers Chief of Operations; and Caron County Commissioners Bill O’Gurek, Charlie Getz, and Wayne Nothstein, to officially open the new connector road over the Francis E. Walter Dam between Route 940 and Bear Creek/White Haven Road. Congressman Kanjorski helped secure nearly \$2.8 million in federal funding to relocate the roadway.

Every water release from the dam generates more than \$2 million in economic activity. The location of the old road allowed only seven releases each year, primarily for whitewater rafting excursions and spinoff spending. Now that all travel will occur on top of the dam, water can be released 22 times each year. Because this is a gain of 15, the water releases that will occur because of this road will generate an **additional** \$30 million. In addition, the water level will be kept higher, which is better for fishing and boating.

The old road flooded during heavy rainfall and was often rendered impassable, forcing local residents and emergency vehicles to drive entirely around the dam complex.

“The new road will provide tremendous recreational and transportation benefits to the region. The added recreational activities will draw more tourists, which translates into more money for our area hotels, businesses and restaurants. I applaud the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers for their work on this project and Representative McCall, who have worked with all of the water recreation organizations to make this project come to fruition,” Congressman Kanjorski said.

“Besides the recreational benefits, the relocated road provides improved safety to travelers because it will allow people to travel during any type of weather. During heavy rain, they will no longer face the safety hazard posed by flooding. The new road location also means that emergency vehicles can pass freely without taking the time-consuming detour that was necessary when the old road was flooded.”

State Rep. Keith McCall (D-122) said the project has been a great opportunity to work with Congressman Kanjorski and thanked him for his support.

“This project will contribute significantly to public safety, and at the same time have a powerful impact on our economy with increased recreational opportunities,” Rep. McCall said. “At the same time, there are strong benefits to the ecology of the river.”

“The opening of the modified access road marks a milestone in the dam’s history and the future of recreation in the region. It provides the public, emergency responders and dam tenders with year-round safe access to and over the dam and it gives us the flexibility to explore new operating procedures,” said Roy Denmark, Army Corps of Engineers Chief of Operations. “This year’s effort to enhance recreation along the Lehigh River has been truly a team effort that has spanned federal and state agencies, public organizations, and private citizens and I am very proud of how the team, under what have been so far historically dry conditions, has worked together to accommodate the interests of all stakeholders. Additionally, the public’s response has been tremendous and I am encouraged about the development of next year’s plan.”

Dr. Douglas Austen, executive director of the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission, added, “Fishing and boating are popular pursuits in Pennsylvania, with a rich and historic tradition on the Lehigh River. The improvements to the facilities at the F.E. Walter Dam will expand the recreational potential of the Lehigh River. This not only will benefit anglers and boaters, but communities throughout the region.”

Ken Powley, president of the Lehigh Valley Outfitters Association, said he looks forward to working with Congressman Kanjorski in reaching the maximum potential and benefits for the River.

“On behalf of the Lehigh Valley Outfitters Association, we are enormously pleased with the interest and effort Congressman Kanjorski put into securing the funding for the roadway project, as well as the other legislators who had a hand in it. It was a nice bipartisan effort,” Mr. Powley said. “While we ran into a few kinks as far as whitewater releases, Congressman Kanjorski’s efforts have clearly put us all on track for realizing the benefits of increased tourism and recreation opportunities.”

Local and state officials were also on hand Wednesday, as well as representatives from the Pocono Mountain Vacations Bureau, Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, Department of Lehigh Valley Stocking Exchange, Lehigh Valley Canoe Club, and The Wildlands Conservancy.