

### JUSTIFICATION FOR PROJECT DIVERTING FOREST LAND

The existing project road section is mostly intermediate/two lane highway with varying pavement width. With present and projected high traffic volumes, the capacity of the present highway is insufficient for handling the high volume of traffic and calls in for improvements to a 4-lane carriageway with paved shoulder. The road has settlements, and the traffic flow is seriously impacted by severe conflicts between the local and through traffic. This is further compounded by the various land use conflicts, in terms of uncontrolled development along the highway. The population growth, increase in traffic volumes, mining activities and the economic development along the corridor would continue to occur and will worsen the already critical situation. The existing unsafe conditions and the adverse environmental consequences in terms of the environmental quality along the highway would continue to worsen in the absence of the proposed improvements. Moreover, if it is decided not to proceed with the project, then the attendant reduced socio- economic development of this remote, relatively poorly connected area cannot be justified. Therefore, the no- action alternative is neither a reasonable nor a prudent course of action for the proposed project, as it would amount to failure to initiate any further improvements and impede economic development.

The proposed development is found to have a positive impact in the long run on social, environmental, economic and financial issues. This scenario includes the widening to 2/4 lanes with paved shoulder of the existing two lanes stretch as envisaged in the project objectives. The scenario is economically viable and will improve the existing conditions. It, would thereby, contribute to the development goals envisaged by the Governments of Tamil Nadu and India, and enhance the growth potential of the area.

To minimize the acquisition of land and properties, the project envisages the development within the existing ROW as much as possible. However, need for land acquisition has also been envisaged for Bypass sections. Despite the various development benefits likely to accrue due to the project, as is the case of every road development project, the project would be accompanied by certain impacts on the natural, social and environmental components. The potential impacts on the various environmental components can be avoided through good environmental practices. Wherever avoidance of negative impact has not been possible, appropriate mitigation and enhancement actions will be worked out to effectively offset the environmental damages inflicted due to the project. In due course of project planning Diversion of Minimal Area in Kollidam River is being filed as the project road crosses the said river.



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