

JUSTIFICATION FOR LOCATING THE PROJECT IN PROTECTED FOREST AREA

The National Highways & Infrastructure Development Corporation Limited (NHIDCL), Government of India has decided to upgrade the newly declared National Highways to two lane/two lane with paved shoulder and /or strengthening of various sections of National Highways. The work would be taken up for up gradation on corridor concept under **Strategic Planning** by Government of India. Therefore, corridors include strengthening (in adjoining stretches) in addition to widening to 2 lane with paved shoulders standards in order to have a better facility in a long continuous stretch. In pursuance of the above, the rehabilitation and upgrading to 2 lane with paved shoulders configuration of Bagrakot to Kafer (Existing km 0+000 to 40+000) & Kafer to Reshi border (Length 40+000 to 96+254) of NH-717A in West Bengal State under Package-IV & Package-V Programme in West Bengal State has been started and is in initial construction phase.

The Project stretch from km 0+000 to 61+100, falls under Kalimpong district of state West Bengal. The Forest land (116.001 Ha) for use of road construction has been already diverted by the State Government of West Bengal collectively for entire stretch from Bagrakot to Kafer (Existing km 0+000 to 40+000) & Kafer to Reshi border (Length 40+000 to 96+254) of NH-717A in West Bengal State under Package-IV & Package-V Programme. Stage-II approval for the same is granted on 19th Feb 2021. Further to ease the gradient of proposed alignment as per the IRC guidelines there is cutting proposed which will lead to produce a significant amount of earth material and soil cut during the road construction work. Most of the proposed road alignment is falling in the forest land. For stretch falling in revenue land, suitable land has been identified for muck dumping. But, for stretch falling in forest land, no revenue land is available near the site. Therefore, to dispose the earth material and soil cut generated from stretch in forest land in the systematic manner twelve dumping sites are identified of **3.621 Ha** between Km 34.500 to km 56.600, without standing tree in the forest land near the road alignment which altogether will have capacity of approx. **7.15 Lacs CuM**. The dump will only contain earth material and soil cut, and no construction material will be dumped at proposed sites.

NHIDCL is proposing Forest land diversion of **3.621 Ha** between Km 34.500 to km 56.600 under Kalimpong Forest Division for earth material and soil cut disposal in Construction, Rehabilitation and Upgrading to 2 lane with paved shoulders configuration of NH-717A in the state of West Bengal. The sites identified for disposal of earth material and soil cut are very specific and economical as out of 61.100 Km, 48.5 Km stretch falls in forest land and there is no non-forest land available for disposal of earth material and soil cut near the site or within 5 Km area. Therefore, kindly consider the sites for disposing of material at earliest for smooth operation of highway construction.


Signature of User Agency
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