



City of Reading, Pennsylvania
Office of the Mayor, Eddie Morán

Friday, September 6, 2024

PA House Transportation Committee
PA Department of Transportation
Attn: Secy. Michael Carroll
Keystone Building
400 North St., Fifth Floor
Harrisburg, PA 17120

Dear Secretary Carroll,

We are excited for your visit today and wanted to take the opportunity to request your advocacy and leadership to ensure that Reading can thrive going forward. We are deeply committed to restoring the iconic "Welcome to Reading" sign that was destroyed in the summer of 2023 by an out-of-control pickup truck at the Route 422 exit to Penn Street. This sign reflects our city's resilience, our hospitality, and our pride in calling Reading home. We understand that our contractor reached out to PennDOT for approval to restore the sign in its original location. However, we were informed by Mr. Michael Paffrath, District Outdoor Advertising Manager at PennDOT District 5-0, that there is no mechanism by which PennDOT can approve a welcome sign within the infield area of a limited access highway interchange. The history of how the original sign was placed in that location remains unclear, but what is clear is that replacing it in that exact spot is a gray area according to current PennDOT regulations. We firmly believe that this sign belongs exactly where it once stood and relocating it to another area is simply not an option. We implore PennDOT to reconsider and work with us to honor this important symbol of our City's identity. It is important to us to welcome visitors, family and friend and the sign serves as a reminder that we exist, and Reading is here to stay. We do not want travelers on the 422 bypass to pass us by but rather stop and stay and start their family. As we discuss public transportation priorities and investments today, we ask Secretary Michael Carroll and his team to join us in finding a solution that respects both state regulations and our community's desire to restore the sign in its rightful place. Reading is not just a passerby city and restoring our inviting 'Welcome to Reading' sign reminds both travelers and residents that Reading is a city full of life, bold culture, and is worth visiting. Together, we can ensure that Reading's welcome to residents and visitors alike remains as strong as ever.

Sincerely,
Mayor Eddie Moran
Reading City Council