

PROCEEDINGS OF THE PUBLIC HEARING FOR THE PROPOSED PROJECT FOR WIDENING AND IMPROVEMENT OF THE EXISTING 2 LANE TO 4 LANING OF NATIONAL HIGHWAY 31-D, FOR THE STRETCH FROM DABGRAM, BLOCK-RAJGUNJ, SILIGURI (KM 8.370) TO JAICHANDPUR, BLOCK- FALAKATA, FALAKATA, JALPAIGURI (KM 96.175) (TOTAL LENGTH 87.805 KM) THROUGH THE DISTRICT OF JALPAIGURI WITHIN THE STATE OF WEST BENGAL PROPOSED BY M/S NATIONAL HIGHWAYS AUTHORITY OF INDIA HELD ON 07.07.2010 AT 11:30 HRS AT THE CONFERENCE HALL OF THE OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT MAGISTRATE, JALPAIGURI, WEST BENGAL

M/s. National Highway Authority of India submitted an application to West Bengal Pollution Control Board for conducting a Public Hearing for the proposed project for widening and improvement of the existing 2 lane to 4 laning of NH-31D for the stretch from Dabgram (km 8.370) to Jaichandpur, Block-Falakata, Falakata (km 96.175) (Total length 87.805km) through the District of Jalpaiguri in the state of West Bengal. As per the EIA Notification S.O. 1533 dated 14th September, 2006 of the MoEF, Govt. of India, Environmental Clearance of the said project is required to be obtained from the MoEF, Govt. of India after conducting the Public Hearing.

Accordingly, West Bengal Pollution Control Board after observing all formalities, held the Public Hearing on 07th July, 2010 at 11.30 Hrs. at the Conference Hall of the Office of the District Magistrate, Jalpaiguri, West Bengal. All the panel members were present in the hearing. Sri Y. R. Rao, IAS, Additional District Magistrate, Jalpaiguri presided over the public hearing. List of the panel members and the others presented in the public hearing is enclosed.

The hearing started with a welcome note from Dr. T. K. Gupta, Chief Engineer, WBPCB. He explained about the provisions of the above stated MoEF Notification and also informed the audience about the draft proposal of M/s. National Highway Authority of India. The project proponent was then asked to explain the details about the proposed project for discussion among the panel members and others present in the hearing.

Sri R. K. Choudhury, Project Director, National Highway Authority of India, initiated the discussions on the proposed project and subsequently narrated the details of the project, likely environmental impacts arising out during the pre and post construction periods and proposed mitigation measures through a power point presentation.

During the discussion the panel members and the others present in the public hearing made queries / suggestions with respect to the proposed project, which are noted below:

Sri Mantu Roy, Kadamtala, Jalpaiguri welcomed such development programme for construction of East-West corridor passing through the District of Jalpaiguri. However, he has requested the NHAI authority to consider the situation of the local community during land acquisition process. Forest department should be consulted for uprooting of trees and also afforestation programme.

Sri Kamal Roy, Karmadhakya, Janasyastha, Jalpaiguri Zilla Parishad welcomed the proposed project with all the commitments made by the project proponent during their presentation. He suggested that local people should be informed properly during land acquisition process. He has requested the concerns of the local people need to be considered favorably and R&R policy should be implemented in consultation with the district and local authorities.

Dr.T. K. Gupta, Chief Engineer, WBPCB, further pointed out the following points :

- ★ Adequate measures should be adopted to eliminate fugitive emission during transportation of raw materials
- ★ The PP should find out the total no. of ponds to be filled up on the either side of the proposed project and take approval from the appropriate authority
- ★ Permanent noise barrier should be installed near schools and hospitals
- ★ NHAI should extend necessary support for community development and health system as a part of the Corporate Social Responsibility
- ★ R&R rules for land acquisition should be followed strictly as per Govt. norms

Sri R. K. Choudhury, Project Director, National Highway Authority of India, appreciated the various issues expressed by different participants and welcomed the suggestions. He indicated that the PP would address all the above stated issues while finalizing the environmental management plan. He confirmed that they would address the R&R issues as per NHAI norms and in consultation with district authority and the State Government. He also committed that the social responsibility programme shall be taken up in consultation with local administration.

Sri Y. R. Rao, IAS, Additional District Magistrate, Jalpaiguri, emphasized that all possible measures should be ensured by the project proponent towards the mitigation of all environmental problems and various points raised by the public present in the hearing. He also added that Sri M.K. Ranoo, Dy. Magistrate, Land Acquisition, Jalpaiguri Dist. may be consulted for further details regarding land issues in the propose project. Since the project is of national importance it is pertinent to see that the project is completed successfully while addressing the genuine concerns of the local public.

Dr. T. K. Gupta
Chief Engineer (Planning)
WBPCB

Sri Y. R. Rao, IAS
Additional District Magistrate, Jalpaiguri
District - Jalpaiguri