

Route 219 project gets \$55M

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CUMBERLAND — Plans to improve U.S. Route 219 in Garrett County have been awarded \$55 million in federal funding, according to Maryland lawmakers.

The funding, which consists of \$11 million annually for five years, is part of an ongoing goal to transform U.S. Route 219 into a modern four-lane divided highway which would extend from Pennsylvania through Maryland into West Virginia.

A joint announcement on the funding package was issued Wednesday by the offices of Sens. Ben Cardin, Chris Van Hollen, and Rep. David Trone.

Although some sections, particularly in Pennsylvania and Maryland, have been completed, the latest funding will allow construction to continue on a mile-long section near Grantsville.

Jennifer Walsh, executive director of The Greater Cumberland Committee, said the funding “will benefit the completion of (the Maryland) section, which is about 1.3 miles.

It’s from the section they just completed in 2021 ... with the roundabout work which goes from (Interstate) 68 to Old Salisbury Road. The final section will be from Old Salisbury Road to whatever the terminus will be (at the Pennsylvania line).

“Regional collaboration is the common thread in all of our work and we are now seeing the fruits of our labor,” said Walsh.

SEE 219 — 2A

219: Funds to further completion of four-lane highway near Grantsville

CONTINUED FROM 1A

The section being funded at Old Salisbury Road will essentially complete the work needed in Maryland for the project. “The total cost to complete the section is between \$60 and \$63 million,” said Walsh. “We will be very, very close to what we need to finish.”

The U.S. Route 219 section is part of the greater Appalachian Developmental Highway System. Funding for the work comes from the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, which included a \$1.25 billion investment over five years toward the completion of the ADHS, which was established by Congress in 1965. The highway system encompasses 3,090 miles of roads linking 13 states. The ultimate goal is to improve north-south access and commerce in the mountainous region.

A news release issued by Sens. Joe Manchin, Shelley Moore Capito and Rep. David McKinley announced \$37 million in funding for work this year on the project from President Joe Biden’s infrastructure deal. It will provide nearly \$200 million over the next five years for the four-lane highway. Proponents say completion of the ADHS will open the rural region to economic development.

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It was also announced this week that construction of a portion of Corridor H in West Virginia is also receiving federal funding. The corridor is intended to run 130 miles from Interstate 79 at Weston to the Virginia border.

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