

The Cahaba Riverkeeper, a member of the Waterkeeper Alliance, registers its opposition to the Northern Beltline. Updated, adequate environmental information has not been provided. The 1997 FEIS is outdated. A Supplemental EIS must be prepared.

The Cahaba River, which is recognized for its biodiversity second only to the Amazon, has already been declared an impaired waterway by the State of Alabama. With the Northern Beltline construction, ALDOT proposes impact to the Cahaba at its headwaters. The river and its streams should be bridged NOT buried, as currently planned. Protective buffers are mandatory. In the 15 years since the original assessment was completed, science had provided new methods for evaluating the impact of roadways and road building on watersheds. The impact of stormwater runoff was not assessed in the FEIS. The scope of the construction now proposed has also changed since the 1997 study.

We request that you comply with the law. Provide an up-to-date environmental impact statement that includes an acceptable post-construction stormwater design. Others have spoken to the inordinate financial cost of this construction and to personal costs to their families and their communities. We speak for the Cahaba. Not only are you threatening the source of drinking water for hundreds of thousands of people, but you are attempting to do so out of compliance with federal law.

Myra Crawford, PhD
Cahaba Riverkeeper and Executive Director
4650 Old Looney Mill Road
Birmingham, AL 35243