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April 24, 2024

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AOT to Install Chicanes to Prevent Tractor Trailers from Entering the Notch

Barre, Vt. – The Vermont Agency of Transportation (AOT) is starting the process to install traffic mitigation controls called “chicanes” on Vermont Route 108 on either side of Smugglers Notch in continued efforts to prevent tractor trailers and other oversized vehicles from attempting to traverse the narrow, windy road.

AOT has been working with several partners for the past few years to find ways to prevent what have become known as “stuckages” in the Notch. Recent efforts have led to a steady decline in the annual number of trucks stuck in the Notch. Each stuckage closes the highway for a few hours to several hours, which causes traffic to back up and prevents access to businesses and locations on the Stowe and Cambridge sides of the mountain pass.

“We’ve completed various traffic engineering analyses and discussed the options with our partners, and there was a strong consensus that the chicanes are the best option,” said Todd Sears, Deputy Director of the Operations and Safety Bureau.

The chicanes will be temporary and consist of orange barrels and curbs. They are designed to stop tractor trailers and other oversized vehicles, force them to turn around, and thus prevent any attempt to continue driving on VT 108 into the Notch. Vermont statute does not permit oversized vehicles to use the Notch road.

Motorists will see preparation work beginning this week as crews pave the roadway and complete other initial work needed for the installation of the chicanes. The expected timeframe for the chicanes to be fully installed and operational is mid-May.

The effect of temporary chicanes will be studied for at least one to two years. If the chicanes are effective, then regional decision makers will have the opportunity to request prioritization of permanent installations. The permanent chicanes would be designed to stop trucks and also to look attractive and blend into the roadway and landscape.

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