

PRESS REPORTS

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MP'S CALL FOR ACTION ON LIMASSOL-SAITTAS ROAD PROJECT

Unhappy over delays in building the Limassol-Saittas highway, the House Communications Committee has called on the Environment Service to submit an impact assessment for MP's to review.

Committee chairman Yiannakis Thoma urged the government to make constructing the road a priority and to start work immediately despite the global credit crunch. He said the road not only makes economic sense but would also help to reduce the number of traffic fatalities.

"We need to replace funerals for victims of traffic accidents with a better road and non-construction of the road will result in the rural communities of Limassol being further decimated," said the Akel MP.

Disy colleague Andreas Themistocleous agreed that the time for dithering had passed after the previous administration shelved the project.

"A lack of funding can't be made an excuse for further delay, neither can the Environmental Service pose an obstacle to creating the road."

He claimed the current stretch of road had the worst fatal accident rate per kilometer than any other road on Cyprus. "If we want to prevent the Pitsilias area and surrounding region from becoming an old people's home, as other places in Cyprus have become, then this road should happen as soon as possible," said Themistocleous.

He argued that it was "absurd" for some to suggest that above all else, even people, the environment comes first because this road serves thousands of residents. "For all the MPs and community leaders of the region, the real issue is for construction procedures to be speeded up."

Diko MP Athena Kyriakidou accused the Environment Service of sitting on the conclusions of an impact study on the road. "If they were really interested, they would have submitted the results so this issue can take its course." Fellow Diko MP Angelos Votsis said regardless of whether the environmental impact study was positive or negative a political decision had to be made for construction to proceed. Pelendri community leader Nicos Patsiaouros said that a Limassol-Saittas road was essential to keep the countryside alive.

"For us it's a matter of life and death," he said.

"We live in those mountains because we care about and fight for the environment ... everything should be done to by-pass all the difficulties for road construction to begin."