

‘It ruined my retirement’: Locals who fought I-395 connector for years now dread its opening

[Kasey Turman](#) 12 hours ago [June 27, 2025]



Richard Hatch stands on a berm that was put in as a barrier between his driveway and the slope down to the I-395 connector to try to decrease the road noise he heard. Hatch is one of numerous residents of Brewer, Holden and Eddington who had their land affected by the construction of new highway. Credit: Linda Coan O'Kresik / BDN

Richard Hatch's backyard had been a space for him to relax while watching deer and listening to the serene sounds that come from the wooded area for the past two decades.

But over the past year, his backyard has been overrun by the sound of heavy machinery and construction workers who spent the last year digging, building, paving and painting the connector between Interstate 395 and Route 9.

“It ruined my retirement,” Hatch said.

Hatch is one of nearly 60 residents of Brewer, Holden and Eddington who had their land purchased, reshaped or affected by the construction, according to a [Maine Department of Transportation record](#).

The [controversial project](#) has been in planning since 2000, under construction since 2017 and will open this weekend. The \$107 million road spans 6 miles between I-395 and Route 9 and is meant to ease truck traffic and improve safety on nearby routes 46 and 1A by more directly linking Canada to the U.S. highway system.



The new I-395 connector runs right beside the home of Richard Hatch. Credit: Linda Coan O’Kresik / BDN

Hatch, 69, publicly voiced his opposition to the project nearly a decade ago in a [Bangor Daily News article](#).

Hatch called the state’s process in choosing the route “unfair” because it chose to build the connector less than a football field away from his property after telling him it would be in different areas during the planning process.

One of the state’s early plans included the connector going through Hatch’s house, something Hatch would have preferred because the state would have had to purchase his whole property and he could have bought another house in a quiet area.

Instead, the connector runs within a couple hundred feet of his bedroom window.

Owners of properties that neighbor the connector, like Hatch’s, were compensated for the drop in value that the increase in noise will have. That process required residents to estimate how much of the decrease would be and send it to the state for approval, Hatch said.

Hatch estimated his property value would decrease by \$50,000, but he doesn't know if that will stay true when traffic starts to drive past his house. He also said there were things that he would lose, like the wildlife in his yard, that wouldn't be shown in the value.

And because of the plummeting property value, Hatch said he can't afford to move to another house to get away from the problems the connector has created.

One of Hatch's neighbors, [Lakeman and Sons](#), a scrap metal dealer and recycler, owns property that not only touches the connector, but was split by the construction. The business used to have 65 uninterrupted acres that were used to house and work with scrap metal. Now, the connector split it into lots of 30 and 26 acres while construction took up 9 acres in the middle.



Stephan Lee, who owns Lakeman & Sons with his wife Victoria, is not happy with how the connector impacted their business. Their 65 acres was split in half by the highway and 9 acres in the middle were taken for construction. Credit: Linda Coan O'Kresik / BDN

The owners, Stephan and Victoria Lee, said the state bought the land where the connector runs for less than they thought it was worth, but didn't say how much they were paid for it.

After the land was split, the Lees didn't have access to the 26 acres on the west side of the connector, making it landlocked from nearby roads. The Lees were able to get a driveway to their land on Levenseller Road after hiring lawyers to work with the state.

Multiple residents who spoke to the Bangor Daily News said the connector didn't need to be built and there wasn't enough input taken from them during the planning process.

Current and previous directors and managers at the Maine Department of Transportation did not respond to requests for comment.

Not everyone is upset about the new route. Ben Poland moved into his house on Eastern Avenue before construction on the connector started in 2020. Since then, an overpass and the two-lane connector have been built next to his property.

Despite being one of the closest houses on the street to the connector, he doesn't think his family will be affected because the road is only two lanes and there's a buffer of trees between his house and the road.

Poland said he sees its benefit because of how much he uses Route 9 and how much easier travel will be with the connector.

Poland also said the site workers were helpful, a sentiment echoed by other nearby residents.

Hatch was asked if he wanted a dirt barrier between his driveway and the slope down to the connector to decrease road noise, and said project manager Scott Blanchard of the Maine DOT helped Hatch every time he had a question about the project. Blanchard even helped build Hatch three dirt berms in his backyard so he could continue shooting his guns for target practice without bullets flying over the road.

Hilma Adams, who lives on Clewleyville Road, said her driveway had to be moved and elongated because of an overpass location, but the workers took time to move it and plant new trees in the process.

And the owner of at least one store said it has something to gain when the road opens.

The Eddington Store sits less than a mile away from where the connector meets Route 9.

The connector will bring more customers because the connector will bring them right past the shop, Scott Martin, one of two co-owners, said.



The Eddington Store sits less than a mile away from where the connector meets Route 9 and the owner is optimistic that there will be an increase in traffic to his store. Credit: Linda Coan O’Kresik / BDN

The business will be able to keep all of its current clientele because they’re already local, but will increase the amount of customers from farther away because it’s the closest gas station and would be an easy place to stop for food.

Eric Glidden, the Brewer city manager, hopes residents see positive changes despite previous opinions.

“While we understand that there have been strong opinions about the project over the years, our role as the community is now to ensure this new corridor brings as much value to our residents and businesses as possible,” Glidden said.