

**From: Christopher.Douwes@dot.gov**  
**[mailto:Christopher.Douwes@dot.gov]**  
**Sent: Wednesday, March 14, 2007 8:39 PM**  
**To: john@coremarketing.tv**  
**Subject: Environmental Enhancement Inquiry: I think I better understand your inquiry.**

**Good evening, Mr Nolan.**

**I received your voice mail from earlier today. I used this evening to take more time to go through your inquiry.**

**Under the Transportation Enhancement (TE) activities, there is no specific category for "architectural barrier walls", but now that I think I better understand your inquiry, I can think of many situations for which a project sponsor would want to use a product such as SlipStone.**

**From the description and pictures I saw on the website, SlipStone looks like a useful product, and the website shows many advantages. Here are some situations in which a project sponsor might want to consider a product such as SlipStone. It is certainly far better looking than Jersey barriers! I think people also can appreciate the ability to "get in and get out" quickly: the website points to safety and time benefits for all.**

**If a project sponsor for a TE project, a Recreational Trails Program (RTP) project, or any highway project were to require walls for any purpose, yes, it appears a project sponsor could consider using a product such as SlipStone. For example, for the eligible TE activities, listed at <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/te/teas.htm>:**

**\* If a bicycle or pedestrian facility needs architecturally good looking wall, a project sponsor might want to consider a product such as SlipStone.**

**\* If a project sponsor needs a retaining wall for a trail, for a scenic byway visitor center, or for a transportation museum, a project sponsor might want to consider a product such as SlipStone.**

**\* If a project sponsor is doing landscaping and scenic beautification along a highway, a project sponsor might want to consider a product such as SlipStone: and see the Highway Example below.**

**\* If a project sponsor is doing a historic preservation project, and needs a special wall that maintains a historically accurate context, I suspect SlipStone could be a useful product in situations where a project sponsor might need to do some work to make something look historical.**

**Likewise, for an RTP project (see <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/rectrails/rtbroch.htm#eligible>), if a project sponsor needs to construct a retaining wall for a trail or a trailside or trailhead facility, or any other kind of wall, yes, a project sponsor might want to consider a product such as SlipStone.**

**HIGHWAY EXAMPLE, and perhaps this is the situation about which you were inquiring:**

**If a highway department needs to construct highway barrier walls, and prefers to use architecturally good looking walls, such as SlipStone, rather than boring concrete Jersey barriers or any other boring looking wall, YES, a highway project sponsor may use TE funds to cover the increased cost of an architecturally good looking wall above the cost of a boring looking wall. I did some research this evening, and I found that we covered this topic in a Question and Answer session with State DOT Transportation Enhancement Program Managers, which we posted at [http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/te/qa\\_state0705.htm](http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/te/qa_state0705.htm); scroll down to Q&A #16 and especially #17. I think, perhaps, this is the answer you (and the general public) want.**

**HOWEVER: if SlipStone costs less than a traditional boring wall, because of the ease of getting in and out, well, we use TE funds for excess costs over a regular highway project. If the highway project costs less because the project uses SlipStone, then this would be a cost savings for regular highway funds, with no need to tap into the TE funds. The highway designer could use regular highway funds, use SlipStone, and save the public time and money and improve safety. We would all benefit.**

**But, again, if the SlipStone costs a bit more than a boring wall, yes, the additional cost to improve the looks is eligible for TE funds. If the cost is reasonable, I think a lot of people would prefer to see an architecturally interesting looking barrier or wall over a boring looking wall.**

**Hopefully this answers your inquiry.**

**Anyway, as I said, I hope we can both move forward to success. From what I can see, SlipStone looks like it has many beneficial uses to improve the looks of barrier walls, and to improve transportation safety.**

**- Christopher**