

August 11, 2017

Ms. Amishi Castelli, Ph.D.
Environmental Protection Specialist
USDOT Federal Railroad Administration
One Bowling Green, Suite 429
New York, NY 10004

Mr. RJ Palladino, AICP, PP
Senior Program Manager
NJ TRANSIT Capital Planning
One Penn Plaza East - 8th Floor
Newark, NJ 07105

Dear Ms. Castelli and Mr. Palladino:

As the leading business organization in New Jersey representing nearly 20,000 companies that collectively employ more than 1 million people, the New Jersey Business & Industry Association supports the Hudson Tunnel Project. In fact, we believe that swift action to expand the transportation capacity between New Jersey and New York City is critical to the economic stability of our state.

The 100-year-old tunnels that are servicing us in the 21st century are already operating at capacity and are in desperate need of repairs and replacement. Without additional access, the work needed for those tunnels would cause a transportation shortage that would be nothing short of a crisis.

No area of the country is as dependent on mass transportation as the North Jersey-New York region. In 2015, commuters took more than 4.3 billion unlinked trips in Newark and New York City, the most of any region in the nation. The second highest region, Los Angeles, had one-seventh of that volume.

But this goes well beyond the ability to move people from one place to another. The future of mass transit between us and New York will broadly impact our economic development, job creation and the quality of life.

In an article on North Jersey's economy, our affiliate, New Jersey Business magazine, summed it up this way: "*Widespread transportation connectivity in many of the state's northern counties has helped spur new residential and commercial development...with downtown revitalization efforts linked to transit-oriented development creating new residential units, businesses, jobs and ratables...*"

The Hudson Tunnel is part of the \$24 billion Gateway Project, which is estimated to generate \$9 billion in economic activity and create hundreds of thousands of jobs.


The train tunnels underneath the Hudson River are fundamental to that transportation connectivity we rely on. Approximately 450 trains per day carrying 200,000 passengers cross between Newark, N.J. and New York City. The demands on this transportation system can only be expected to grow. Hudson County is one of New Jersey's fastest growing counties, followed by Bergen County and Union County.

Closure of even one tube along the existing 10-mile tunnel would reduce capacity by up to 75 percent. In other words, instead of 24 trains per hour going between New York and New Jersey, we would have only six.

The larger Gateway Project is also necessary to maintain resiliency. The North River Tunnel under the Hudson River, which has deteriorated due to age, intensive use, and damage sustained from saltwater exposure during Superstorm Sandy in 2012.

New Jersey needs the Hudson Tunnel Project to move forward quickly. The current tunnels have a life expectancy of only 10 more years. New Jersey and New York simply do not have the means to carry out this project on our own. It is critical that we secure substantial federal funding for the Hudson Tunnel Project. That means we need to expedite the planning and permitting necessary to make the project a reality.

Sincerely,


Michele N. Siekerka, Esq.
President and CEO